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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

STOICHKOV

WE GO THE DISTANCE WITH BARCA'S RAGING BULL

CANTONA

Will he stay or will he go?

ROMARIO

Why he's back in Brazil

MALDINI: "Thank you, World Soccer"

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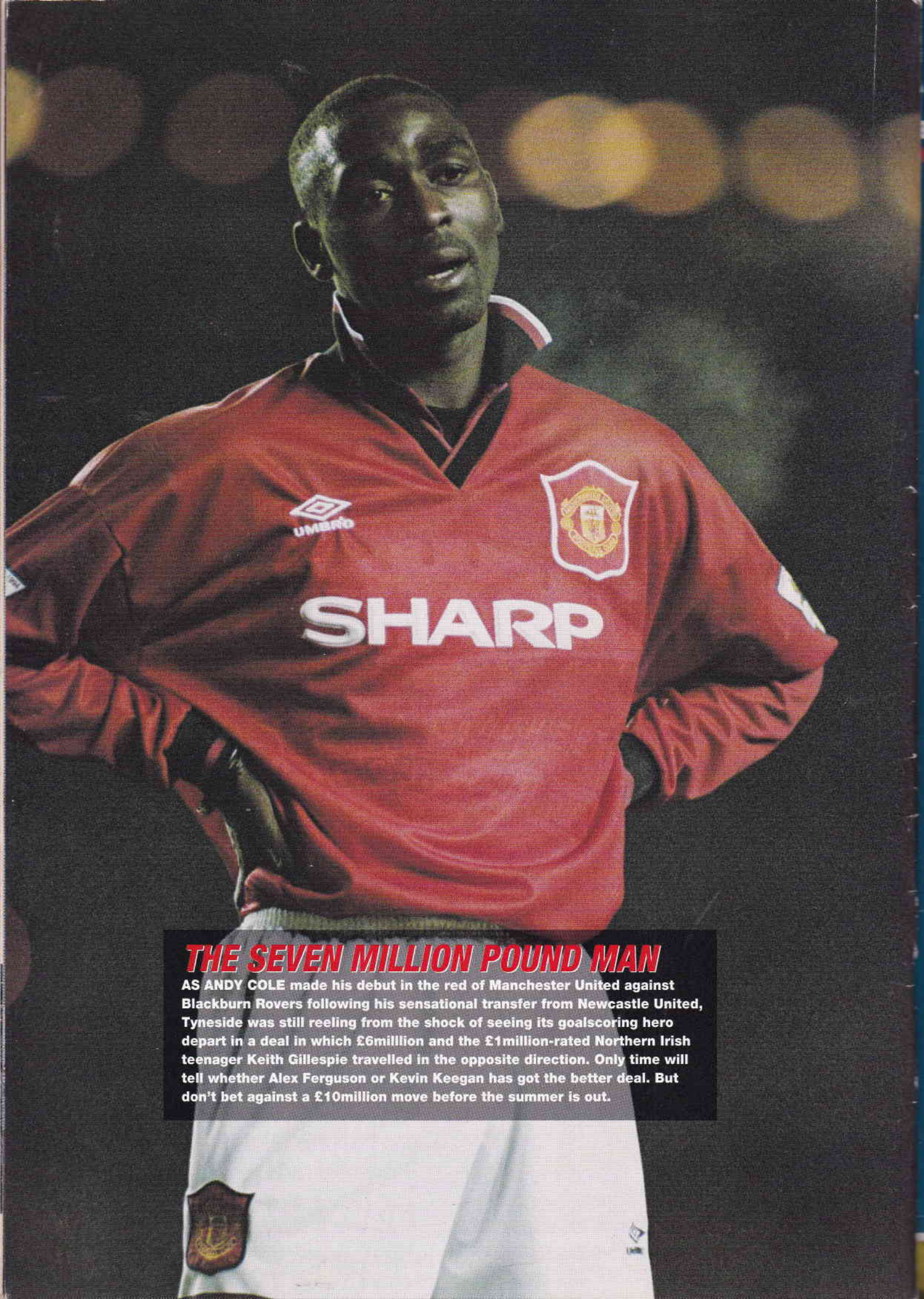

THE SEVEN MILLION POUND MAN

AS ANDY COLE made his debut in the red of Manchester United against Blackburn Rovers following his sensational transfer from Newcastle United, Tyneside was still reeling from the shock of seeing its goalscoring hero depart in a deal in which £6milllion and the £1million-rated Northern Irish teenager Keith Gillespie travelled in the opposite direction. Only time will tell whether Alex Ferguson or Kevin Keegan has got the better deal. But don't bet against a £10million move before the summer is out.

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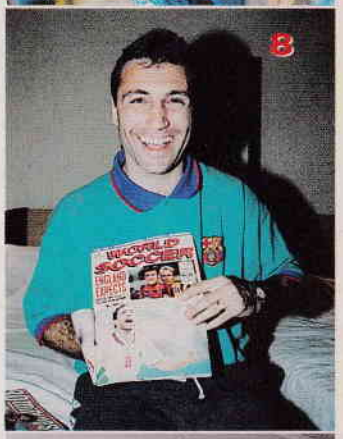
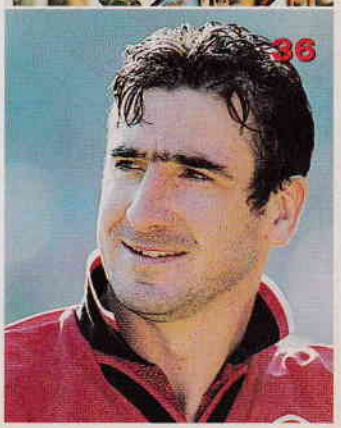




ESM
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

The homeboy

Keir Radnedge tells the inside story of Romario's sensational return to Brazil

EYEBROWS were raised when, in the summer of 1993, Barcelona bought Romario from PSV Eindhoven. Not out of surprise that the Spanish champions should have coveted a player of his talent. But the size of the fee.

Now, in the wake of his return home to Flamengo, all is clear.

Barcelona paid PSV little more than £2million which, in the inflated state of the international transfer market, was a bargain basement figure. Now Barcelona fans understand just why they got Romario on the cheap and the club are left wondering if their confidence in Johan Cruyff's ability to tame any firebrand might have been ever so slightly misplaced.

Barcelona have had plenty of awkward individuals around the Nou Camp before. Like Diego Maradona. Like Bernd Schuster. It's almost always ended in tears. The only surprise this time was that the falling out came sooner rather than later.

The writing appeared on the wall when Romario – about to be crowned FIFA's World Footballer of the Year as well as International Sportsman of the Year by *L'Equipe* – delayed his return to Spain after the World Cup by more than three weeks.

Cruyff was expected to discipline him by leaving him out of the league team at the season's start. But there he was in the starting line-up despite the disciplinary hitch and despite the fact that, as a goalscorer pure and simple, Romario is far removed from the polyvalent approach Cruyff demands of all his other players.

Perhaps then Romario began to believe that it didn't matter how he behaved. But by Christmas he had collected only four league goals, hardly the leading scorer form which he had displayed both with PSV and then with Barcelona (30 goals last term).

Clearly, this was a man who wanted out.

What happened next is the subject of confusion. According to assistant coach Carlos Rexach, Romario had already begun talking over contract improvements even though it did not expire until the summer of 1996. According to other reports, Cruyff told Romario that, while he was back in Brazil over the holiday period, he might look for a new club there.

Romario himself says the idea came to him after the World Cup and he made up his mind after going home for Christmas.

In the event Romario had hardly arrived back in Spain after the holiday than he was followed by Flamengo's Kleber Leite, claiming he had the money Barcelona would want for Romario.

Negotiations went like a breeze. Romario was happy to pay back the £150,000 pay cheque for January and February which Barcelona had advanced him. Flamengo were happy to agree to a clause banning his transfer anywhere else before the summer of 1996 (when his Barcelona contract would have expired) and conceding to Barcelona full rights over any future transfer, whether back to Europe or within Brazil.

Then, it came to the hard part: money.

Leite had arrived in Spain with guarantees for £2million. He had expected that Romario's poor form and impatience to quit would have persuaded Barcelona to sell at a knock-down price. Wrong. Barcelona wanted £3million up front, never mind the rest. Leite had to rush for the phone and try to persuade Brazil's state oil corporation and the Rio de Janeiro local authority to come up with the rest of the cash immediately.

This they agreed to do, though not without some controversy. Romario may be a national institution in Brazil but state and municipal enterprises, in a country with cashflow problems, cannot easily be seen spending money on footballers when there is so much else to put right. The complex deal struck was £3million now as a loan fee for two years and then a further £3million if Flamengo want to keep Romario.

Otherwise, Flamengo must pay Barcelona £4million if Romario is to be transferred back to Spain or £1million if he joins another Brazilian team. In all events, Barcelona retain the permanent right to veto any transfer. Leite obtained his promises and returned for Barcelona to put pen to paper, only to be stalled again.

"We are not interested in promises of money," Barcelona vice-president Juan Gaspart told Leite. "We need to know that the money has been deposited in a bank within the European Union. As soon as we get confirmation, then Romario is all yours."

Not exactly "good riddance," but not far off it. Which brings us back to the original theme, that there is more to Romario than meets the eye.

Bobby Robson, with whom Romario had his differences at PSV, always praised Romario the footballer to the heavens. "On the pitch," Robson says, "absolutely magic . . . " leaving the listener to divine the unspoken conclusion about Romario off the pitch.

You can, it is said, take a man away from his roots but you can never take the roots away from the man. In this case a man who had insecurity as a brother. Here, perhaps, back in the Rio favela where he grew up, is the key which unlocks the secret of Romario the restless, the tormented, the tempestuous.

He really was the boy from the wrong side of the tracks. Even today he recalls how he dreamed of escaping the house with no electricity or running water where he, his brother and sister were brought up and where his mother took in washing to supplement the family income.

Now Romario's parents, mother Manuela and father Edevair, live in a sumptuous seven-bedroom villa which their son has bought and furnished and Edevair runs a bar, bought and paid for by Romario. But even these trappings of luxury have not brought security.

Last spring Edevair was kidnapped and held to ransom. He was ultimately released not through payment of money or police detective work but because of the enormous national outcry the crime provoked. Now Edevair goes nowhere without his bodyguards and the family villa is protected by sophisticated alarm systems.

Even with millions in the bank, Romario has yet to find security he wants for his parents and, of course, for himself and wife Monica and their two children (named Monica and Romario, after their parents).

Staying far from his roots was not, for Romario, to be compensated any longer by money. He turned down a £1.5million offer from Milan last autumn and then a £2million contract in Japan. Simply, he had become homesick beyond a cure – and certainly his individualistic manner on and off the pitch meant none would ever be forthcoming from his Barcelona team-mates.

Hristo Stoichkov had never wanted Romario at Barcelona in he first place. When Barca sprung the deal back in 1993 Stoichkov commented: "I don't know why the directors wanted an extra foreign player. If they had asked me I would have recommended Lubo Penev. He's wasted at Valencia."

Romario's last outing for Barcelona was the disastrous 5-0 beating by Real in Madrid. Cruyff, concerned that the transfer talk might have been distracting, left Romario on the bench for the first half then brought him into the game up front after Stoichkov's 12th expulsion (!) in his four and a half years in Spain. But by then Barcelona were 3-0 down. It was all over for them . . . and for Romario.

The player himself eluded interviewers as expertly as he has, for most of his career, eluded his markers. He opened up only briefly, in response to the International Sportsman award.

He said: "When I left Brazil originally to come to Europe I decided I would give myself a maximum of eight years. Now I'm virtually there. Five years at PSV and now nearly two in Spain. I'm 29. I don't want to be still here when I'm 30. You know, I'm a family man. My family means everything to me.

"As for football, it's Brazilian football that I respond to. It's not been the best of times for the domestic game and I believe that I can help restore Brazilian football to its old standard. That's why I want to go home."

He denied that any problems hung over from his extended summer holiday. Romario said: "I talked it all through with Cruyff, Rexach, Gaspart and my personal manager. I had to pay a club fine [£45,000] and I had extra training early every morning for a couple of weeks. Then that was the end of it."

Romario left behind him words of fulsome praise for Barcelona the club, for the other players and for Cruyff ("The best coach in the world"). He also admitted that he made no close friends at Barcelona.

'Staying far from his roots could not be compensated any longer by money . . . he had become homesick beyond a cure'

Certainly the impression of a passing stranger had been enhanced by his insistence of living most of his time between two hotels, one out of town, the other just up the road from the Nou Camp. Wife Monica has long been settled back in Rio, thus adding needless fuel to unsubstantiated gossip that Romario spent more time than was wise out on the town.

The player has a clear conscience. He said: "I'm the sort of man who likes being around other people. I like going dancing, talking with friends, playing billiards. When I'm not free to do these things it makes me feel uncomfortable. Ideally, I would go out every night – except, of course, the night before a match. The trouble is, when you talk about going out people think you mean drink. But I don't drink.

"Anyway, I don't care what people may think. I'm happy that I behave in a professional way. I've never had any problems with Cruyff over it. Whenever he wants me out on the pitch, I'm there for him . . . I've always scored important goals in important matches."

Those goals will now be scored not for Barcelona but for Flamengo.

After years in which Brazilian clubs have been on their financial knees it may appear mysterious how Flamengo came up with the £3million, let alone the salary guarantees which will keep Romario in the style to which he has become accustomed.

Indeed, on being told of his son's likely return home, father Edevair said: "I don't believe it. Not to Flamengo. The only thing you can say about Flamengo is that they have to delay their pay cheques. If Romario wants to play for free he could go to my old club, America!"

Flamengo are now sponsored not only by Brazilian state oil and by the city of Rio but by several other major corporations, including Brahma beer.

No doubt they will all expect him to jump to their orders in a string of promotional campaigns which may restrict the time he can offer to Wanderley Luxemburgo, Flamengo's coach. Wanderley says: "I know that Romario has . . . a certain personality. I have to accept that."

Like everybody else who has crossed Romario's path, Wanderley really has no choice in the matter.

Nobody may come between Romario and his perception of his own destiny.

PRO-FILE

ROMARIO DE SOUZA FARIA

Born January 29, 1966, in Rio de Janeiro

Clubs Vasco da Gama (1985-88), PSV Eindhoven (1988-93), Barcelona (1993-95)

Honours World Cup 1994; Dutch League 1989, 1991, 1992; Dutch Cup 1989; Spanish League 1993, 1994

Awards World Cup Best Player 1994; International Sportsman of the Year 1994

International caps 46

International goals 30

WHAT THEY SAID

Romario: *"I decided I would give myself a maximum of eight years. I'm 29, I don't want to be still here when I'm 30."*

Romario's father, Edevair: *"I don't believe it. Not to Flamengo. The only thing you can say about Flamengo is that they have to delay their pay cheques."*

Flamengo coach, Wanderley Luxemburgo: *"I know that Romario has a certain personality. I have to accept that."*

Johan Cruyff: *"From now on, at least we'll be playing 11 against 11."*

Ronald Koeman: *"Let's just say his departure was the best thing for everybody."*

Commentary

Keir Radnedge

Golden Balls break all the rules

IT IS NOT THE CUSTOM for magazines to comment on each other. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, our successes and failures.

Having said that, I am going to break the rule in astonishment at the golden ball award presented to Diego Maradona by the Paris magazine, *France Football*, for his lifetime contribution to football.

I have no problem with the notion that Maradona is one of the most incredibly gifted footballers ever to strut a pitch. I could even understand if *France Football* had waited a year or so, until Maradona the player had become a somewhat more distant memory.

But to encourage him both to break bail – he had left Argentina without seeking permission from the court where he faces unlawful wounding charges – and laud him while he is serving a suspension for stimulant abuse at the World Cup finals is beyond me. It would be like giving Ronnie Biggs an award for services to railways (I understand the operation also cost *France Football* rather more than they had planned but then, with Maradona, that's par for the course).

FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter, having hedged as long as he could, dropped his diplomatic guard just long enough to concede that "the timing of this award appears a little unfortunate." Johan Cruyff did not mince his words, however, saying: "When you are No 1 you have a responsibility towards the game. You must be careful about the image you present to the world. On that score, Maradona has been a disaster."

True to form, Maradona used the occasion to hit out at everybody in general. He may have shaken the cocaine habit but the paranoia is still there.

Whatever persuaded *France Football* to forsake its self-important pride in being, as it likes to portray itself, a guardian of whatever may be noble in the game? That was its frequently-expounded justification over its admirable and scathing opposition to the reign of Bernard Tapie at Marseille. Yet, in terms of the ethics of the game, Maradona was a sort of Tapie on the pitch, displaying a wholehearted contempt for the stage and the audience for which he danced.

Perhaps *France Football* is undergoing a crisis of confidence. Once upon a time its European Footballer of the Year award was the only international accolade around. Now it is one of many and the Maradona circus was used not merely to try to claw back some international ground but to reveal a change of rules for next year.

Ever since the first golden ball was awarded to Stanley Matthews in 1956, the poll has been open only to Europeans (Argentinians Alfredo Di Stefano, twice, and Omar Sivori qualified through having undertaken, respectively, Spanish and Italian naturalisation). From 1995, however, the European Footballer of the Year award will be open for every star playing in Europe, whatever his nationality.

I fear for my colleagues on *France Football* that this may dilute the prestige of the prize. One assumes – one hopes! – they have thought it through rather better than the Maradona affair.

DIEGO ARMANDO is proposing to set up a worldwide players union to oppose directors' abuse of power. He claims support from Eric Cantona, Bebeto, Hristo Stoichkov, Fernando Redondo and Ruud Gullit. None of whom, as I understand it, has been left destitute by his dealings with these 'directors'. Looking at that list again, it sounds less like a union and more like a Chip on the Shoulder Club.

Unwarranted award . . . Diego Maradona

Big fish, cruel world

WHAT PERSUADES FOOTBALLERS to make some of the transfers they do?

I ask in the wake of the sad affair of Rashidi Yekini, condemned to many months out of the game by injury and a highly uncertain future beyond that.

Yekini, at his goal-grabbing almighty best, was a big, big fish in a small Portuguese pool with Vitoria Setubal. He subsequently led Nigeria to victory in the 1994 African Nations Cup and on to the World Cup finals.

It was hardly surprising that he was coveted by a number of clubs, including others in Portugal and as far afield as Saudi Arabia. Instead, Yekini signed for Olympiakos of Piraeus.

Olympiakos are a big club with enormous pride and a fanatical following. But they are still struggling out of the morass of a financial scandal which makes Marseille look small beer.

Didn't anyone warn him? Did he go in, eyes open? Did he believe he could be the player to bring Olympiakos back around the corner? Or was he influenced by the weight of the contract on offer?

That's the football trap. Pressure induced by the short nature of a footballer's earning span has swayed many players into a bad decision. Marry in haste, repent at leisure. And poor Yekini has plenty of leisure now.

He scored one goal in the first 12 games of the Greek season and both he and the club decided, in October, that they had had enough of each other.

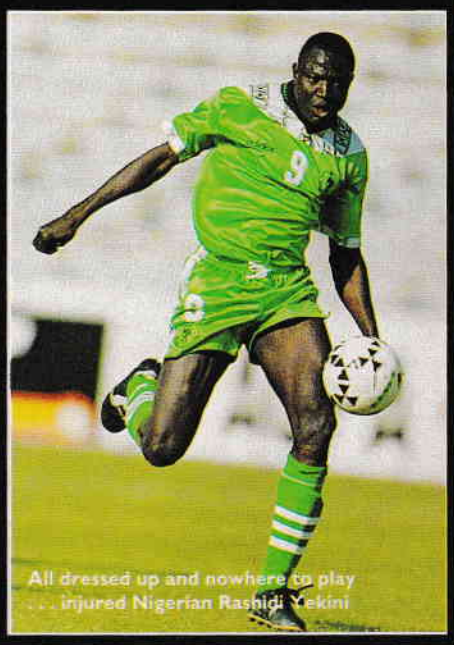
Too late. Most continental countries ban mid-season transfers. He wasn't playing, either. How could he impress prospective purchasers?

The answer appeared heaven-sent, to play for Nigeria against England at Wembley. So he did. But not only did Yekini fail to impress, he injured his left knee.

When Spain's Sporting Gijon did turn up with an offer, the medical showed ligament damage demanding surgery and six months out of the game. Gijon, not surprisingly, pulled out.

Yekini has been marooned. He should have stayed in Portugal. Or gone to France, perhaps, where he could have made a steady living for another couple of years, albeit out of the spotlight.

A cautionary tale, indeed.



All dressed up and nowhere to play . . . injured Nigerian Rashidi Yekini

Sacked . . . Guido Tognoni

No more Mr Nice Guy

FIFA'S abrupt dismissal of Guido Tognoni and Miguel Galan went down extremely badly just about everywhere except, one assumes, the office of president Joao Havelange.

His signature was on the letters they found awaiting them in their offices at FIFA House at 9am on the morning of January 10. Tognoni was FIFA's press officer, Galan head of the competitions department. They were each given half an hour to clear their desks and leave the building. Galan, I understand, did so in tears.

Their crimes? Nothing more than to find themselves in the firing line as Havelange carried on Operation Clean-out.

The first whispers had been heard back in the spring that Havelange considered both men – whether true or not – as members of an unofficial opposition within the FIFA establishment. That he would replace them as soon as the expedient moment arrived.

First Havelange had to secure his re-election as FIFA president, which he did, unopposed in Chicago. Then he cleansed the standing committees of all the regional confederations' general secretaries, whom he also considered potential subversives.

Next step was to remove Tognoni and Galan and pass it off as part of the administrative reorganisation in which legal officer Michel Zen Ruffinen – the same Zen Ruffinen who you know as an international referee and who, coincidentally, happens to come from the same *canton* as Sepp Blatter – was promoted No 2 to the now seriously-discredited general secretary.

Tognoni and Galan do not know what they will do next – apart from consult with their lawyers, that is.

From the media's point of view Tognoni, after a baptism of fire at the 1986 World Cup when he was barely two years into the job, had acquitted himself well and vastly improved FIFA's image within the worlds of press and PR.

Sadly, as the Tognoni and Galan case proves, in the highly-politicised world of international sport, being a nice guy and doing your job well is not necessarily enough.

Fans vote with their feet

FOOTBALL, it appears, is waking up from the Italian dream. So, too, are the Italians.

For years Serie A has been the world's premier league championship. The biggest clubs, the biggest transfer fees, the biggest wage packets and the most exciting players. The fact that many of them were constrained by *catenaccio* tactics into playing rubbish went mostly unnoticed in the outside world.

Now, however, that the game is changing, so is the Italian illusion. Why do you think all the German players are flying home?

Carlos Alberto Parreira, Brazil's World Cup-winning coach who is now at Valencia, says that the Spanish league is the best in the world. Real Madrid's Jorge Valdano agrees, suggesting that even Spain's strugglers play attacking and entertaining football.

Managers and coaches, of course, are notoriously blinkered. They see only their own players, their own teams, their own points of view.

But fans are different. If they don't like the action they stay away. And, what do we find? That, for the first time in 20 years, Italian top division football no longer pulls the biggest average crowds in Europe.

In 1985 Serie A matches averaged 36,000 attendances. Now they have slumped below 30,000 to 28,908. The new leaders are the German fans. Ten years ago Bayern Munich and Co attracted an average attendance of 18,000 – fourth behind Italy, Spain and England.

Now, however, the Bundesliga is best with a halfway match average of 30,261, followed by Italy (28,908), Spain (26,815) and England (23,448).

Second place in the World Cup is clearly no guarantee of domestic bliss.

Every one a winner

HOW many African Footballers of the Year are there? Three, at the last count.

France Football began it, then *Afrique Football* launched its award and now the African Confederation has produced one of its own. Top man is Emannuel Amunike of Nigeria for his World Cup efforts according to *Afrique Football* and CAF but George Weah of Liberia and Paris Saint Germain according to *France Football*.

A year ago the vote was also split when *Afrique Football* went for Rashidi Yekini and *France Football* crowned Abedi Pele. After Nigeria had enjoyed such an outstanding World Cup, I would have thought Amunike or Yekini, perhaps, would have run away with every poll around.

Still, it doesn't do to be too critical, I suppose. People may question why our readers chose Paolo Maldini in *WORLD SOCCER*'s Player of the Year poll while the world's national team coaches came up with Hristo Stoichkov for the FIFA award (see Page 18).

Do our readers know better than the coaches? Well, you can answer that yourselves!

Award winner . . . George Weah

GOOD NEWS for all those of you who have written from time to time inquiring about the fate of Rene Orlando Higuita. The world's most controversial goalkeeper, freed from prison in Bogota after eight months awaiting a trial which may never take place, has been restored to the Colombian national squad by new boss Hernan Gomez.

Higuita, who paid a terrible price for his upfield perambulations at the 1990 World Cup, had been caught in the middle of a kidnap case. He helped negotiate the release of a little girl, held for ransom by one of the drugs cartels. In doing so, he violated a new law intended to prevent negotiation and thus, ruthlessly, break the power of the kidnap gangs.

Missing the World Cup was, perhaps, punishment enough.

MORE changes to the UEFA Cup. From next season seeding to keep clubs from the same country apart will end after the second round instead of after the third round (a minor blow to the Italo-German domination). More interesting, from next season the Final will be a single match, like the Champions Cup and Cup-winners Cup.

FEBRUARY 19 is presidential election day at Real Madrid. All the members have a vote and Madrid's membership includes, funnily enough, the coach Benito Floro, who was dismissed last spring just when he felt he was beginning to see daylight. Wonder if he'll be voting for Ramon Mendoza?

Raging B

In an exclusive interview for WORLD SOCCER *European Footballer of the Year Hristo Stoichkov talked to Jeff King about referees, Romario and his reign in Spain*

WHEN Hristo Stoichkov was crowned European Footballer of the Year last December, it capped a memorable year for the Bulgarian striker. After firing Barcelona to the European Cup Final and a fourth consecutive Spanish league title, he led his country all the way to a World Cup semi-final and finished as the tournament's joint top scorer. Jeff King spoke to the man dubbed 'Raging Bull' by the Catalan press.

WORLD SOCCER: Hristo, let's start by talking about Bulgaria's World Cup success. Did you really expect to do so well?
HRISTO STOICHKOV: To be frank, even though we were optimistic, none of us expected to get *quite* so far. Although after beating a team of France's pedigree in Paris to qualify we were convinced we had a chance of doing well. And though everybody went on about how Bulgaria had never won a World Cup match, hardly anybody mentioned the fact that 16 of our squad had top level experience outside of Bulgaria, in countries like Spain, Portugal and Germany.

I know that at the time you were really disappointed at what happened in the semi-final.
Yes, and what really hurt is that the game was in the hands of the worst referee in the whole World Cup . . .

. . . your friend Joe Quiniou?
That's right. It's still beyond me how the organisers could appoint a French referee for the game after we had knocked France out. Costacurta's handball was the most blatant penalty of the whole World Cup, but Quiniou just didn't want to see it. I think it was obvious that everybody wanted an Italy-Brazil final.

Still, after doing so well, everybody will be expecting a lot more of Bulgaria in the European Championship.
Well, as Bulgaria have never made it to the finals before we'll make history just by getting to England. At the moment we're top of our group and I'm convinced we'll qualify. Germany are our big rivals, but after the World Cup I'm certainly not frightened of them. And we don't play them until the final two games, by which time I'm sure things will be settled. If we beat Wales in our next game we're home and dry.

You came up against Vinnie Jones in Wales.
That's right, though the first time I actually saw him was after the game when he asked to swap shirts! We knew the way the Welsh would try to play so we decided to play the ball around as quickly as possible. That way the likes of Jones can't get near the ball.

I see that Bulgaria have just extended Dimitar Penev's contract for another two years.
That was down to the players. We insisted on him continuing.

So there's some truth to the rumour that Stoichkov is the real boss in the Bulgarian camp?
That's absolute rubbish . . . it really winds me up. Penev was my coach at CSKA for five years and I've got immense respect for him. He's a great one for encouraging dialogue and he loves to sit down with the most experienced players in the squad – people like myself, Lechkov, Balakov and Kostadinov – and talk things through. He particularly likes to talk about how we train with our clubs. But in the end, he puts things together in his own positive way and makes all the important decisions on his own.

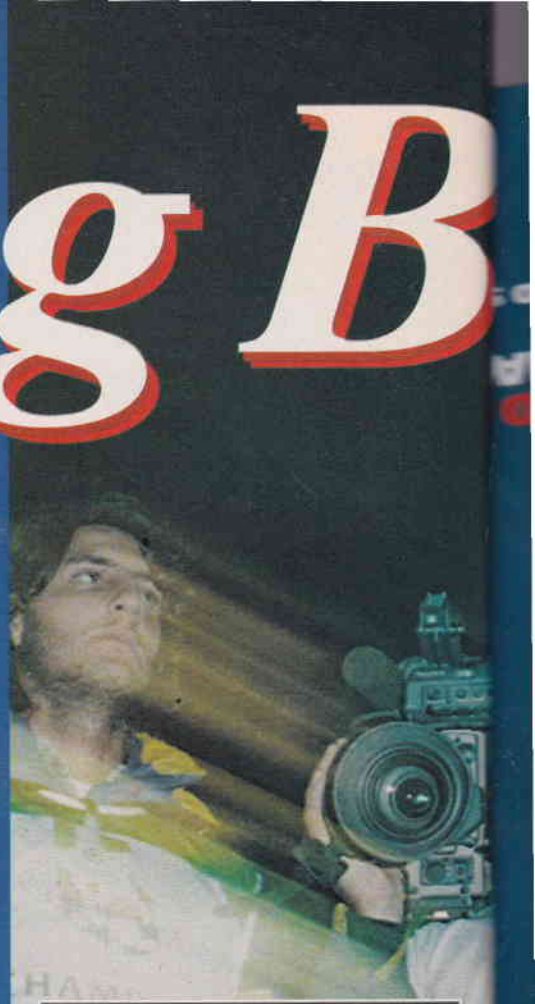
After your recent experiences against Wales and Manchester United, you must like playing against British teams?
If you mean do I like winning, the answer is yes! But seriously, I think British sides have problems against Spanish and Italian teams because our touch and technique is so much better and that means the ball moves around quicker. This tends to undermine their more physical approach.

In general Barcelona's form this season has been disappointing. What's happened to the so-called 'dream team'?
At the moment, absolutely nothing has happened. I've always said it's absurd to judge a team half way through the season. Real Madrid may have a slight advantage but three years ago we were eight points adrift at one stage and still ended up as champions. Basically, we had one real off-day when we were hammered 5-0 in the Bernabeu and now everybody's writing us off. But we also beat Man United 4-0. Has everybody forgotten that? You can only talk about who is the best team on the last day of the season.

A lot of people have said Barca are suffering from a World Cup hangover. Do you agree?
No, not at all. I played right to the end and it hasn't affected me in the slightest. It's just an excuse.

Of course, the World Cup's biggest star is no longer with you. Did Barca do the right thing in letting an unhappy Romario go?
Look, I'm really good friends with Romario so I don't want to criticise him. But I really don't understand how a club like Barca can let the best goalscorer in the world go, especially half way through the season. Tomorrow I could say I'm going too and I could give the same reasons: I've been away from Bulgaria five years, I really miss my mum and dad, and so on. And what are the club going to do? After what has happened with Romario they've set a precedent and morally they can't stop anybody going.

Johan Cruyff reckons that Romario wanted out because he couldn't handle living in Stoichkov's shadow . . .
Yes he said the same thing to me; that Romario may be a god in Brazil but that in Catalonia he couldn't compete with Stoichkov. But to tell the truth I think it was simply a question of time. My relationship with the fans is not an overnight thing. I've had to work really hard for five years to get people behind me in the way they are now. Last year, we both scored a lot of decisive goals and the fans were right behind Romario, the same way they are with Ronald or Bakero. Personally, I don't think jealousy came into it.



Ball boy . . . Stoichkov never strays far from the spotlight

'When I was a little kid m who threw a stone at m

Aren't you being a bit modest? The Barca fans idolise you with a special intensity.
I think that as Barca represents so much to the Catalans they especially identify with players who are clearly prepared to sweat blood for them. They appreciate that when I'm defending *their* colours I do everything in my power to win.

Your unshakeable optimism must help as well. You once said that while you were at Barcelona they would always be champions.
That's right, and I stick by it. If you haven't got strength of character and confidence in your own ability you'll never win anything.

Your never-say-die attitude is legendary. How big a part has it played in your success?
Ninety per cent.

nickname was "the dog" because I once took a bite out of a boy
There was no way I was going to let another kid be badder than me!'

Really, that much?
Yes [laughing]. 90 per cent character and 10 per cent goals. That's what Stoichkov is all about.

But 90 per cent does seem a bit excessive.
Why? Like I said, if you haven't got a strong character you'll never make it. And I've always been the same. When I was a little kid my nickname was 'the dog' because I once took a bite out of a boy who threw a stone at me. There was no way I was going to let another kid be badder than me! And even playing football back then I would cry if I lost a game or missed an open goal. I cried because I was that desperate to win. People who have known me since way back are convinced I've achieved so much precisely because of my character. And I still get furious when I lose although I bottle the tears up inside now.

It used to be said that John McEnroe couldn't play tennis unless he was angry. Is Stoichkov the same on the football field?
Exactly the same. I'm incapable of performing if I'm not worked up, it's impossible. I can relax when I'm playing with my daughters but not on the football field!

So you take it as a compliment when people say you are temperamental?
Absolutely. If you're not on edge you're not really prepared to go out and play. I'm the same in training. If I'm not totally psyched up I might as well be somewhere else. Rather than go through the motions I prefer to ask Cruyff if I can go to the gym and lift weights.

Do your team-mates ever get annoyed when you have a go at them on the pitch?
No, not at all. Once the game is over everything is forgotten. But during those 90 minutes the only thing that matters is winning. And if any of my team-mates don't like that or can't understand why I get worked up, they'd be better off handing their shirts in and retiring from football. The only thing that should matter to them is that I always play for the team. People ask me if being top scorer in the World Cup was as important as Bulgaria getting to the semis; it's a crazy question. My only goal when I run out on to the pitch is to win, it doesn't matter who scores.

Your biggest problem in Spain has been with referees. You've been sent off 12 times playing for Barca in domestic competitions yet during the same period you haven't been sent off once playing in Europe or for Bulgaria. Why is that?
That's because Spanish referees haven't got a clue about football. Playing in Europe or for Bulgaria I can ➤

Pitch battler . . . Barcelona fans idolise Stoichkov and his never-say-die attitude

Outspoken . . . Stoichkov is rarely lost for words

Good as gold . . . the Bulgarian was the runaway winner of the 1994 Ballon d'Or

'I really don't understand how a club like Barca can let the best goalscorer in the world go, especially half way through the season'

talk to referees. Football is a hard game played in a competitive atmosphere and it's obvious that a dialogue goes on with the refs; that's what God gave us mouths for. In Spain you can go around kicking people and nothing happens, but all you have to do is open your mouth and out come the cards. In all honesty, Spanish referees are backward. I see English games on TV every week and the referees and players don't stop talking to each other, and that's the way it should be; you're never going to injure anybody by opening your mouth. But here the referees want to be different; they think they are the best but whenever they go to a World Cup or European Championship they get one game and then they're kicked out.

The blessings of Spanish referees aside, how much longer do you see yourself at Barcelona?
It's difficult to say. At the very least I'd like to see out my contract which has another two years to run. And then we'll see.

And Italy?
There are always rumours, but in reality no Italian club has ever come to Barcelona and put the money on the table to talk seriously. It's mostly paper talk, so I ignore it. Recently, things haven't been so great here and I'm a bit annoyed by certain things, but if the choice was down to me I'd prefer to stay.

I take it that the 'certain things' you refer to mean your recent falling out with Johan Cruyff [the latest in a long line of periodic tiffs; both Cruyff and Stoichkov have a bark far worse than their bite]. Just a couple of weeks after kissing you at the European Footballer of the Year ceremony Cruyff was complaining about your poor form and lack of motivation. What is it about you two?
Look, there's absolutely no problem. Alright, I'm a bit fed up with Cruyff at the moment, but we all know the way he is and I'm not interested in wasting time getting all excited and answering him back. That would only cause problems.

Doesn't it annoy you that when Barca are going through a bad patch, Cruyff's first response is always 'I want more from Hristo'.
But seriously, how can he ask for more? No, it's just the way he is. When the team wins it's because of Cruyff, when we lose it's down to the players, and especially me. It's easy for him to say that. He can't have it both ways, its impossible. I always say that a coach is only as good as his players and vice-versa.

But do you think he moans about you in public as a way of motivating you?
If he does it doesn't work. Do you seriously think I go out for the next game thinking, right I'm going to show him? No, no. I'm a professional and I always do my best for myself and the team. I can't go around all day worrying about what Cruyff says. Quite simply, it's a load of rubbish that I don't give any thought to.

Still, you can't ignore the role he's played in your career. When he picked you up from CSKA Sofia you were an unknown quantity.
Obviously I'll always be grateful to Cruyff for spotting me. But in the five years since I've been here I really don't think he could have asked for more. I've responded with four consecutive Leagues, the European Cup, a European Super Cup, three Spanish Super Cups. It's impossible to ask for more.

Cruyff has invariably used you in wide positions. Do you still consider yourself a natural centre-forward?
I don't think anybody really knows what my natural position is. Not Cruyff, or any other coach. Personally, I feel most comfortable when I'm given a free role. It's obvious that when I'm not tied down I've got more opportunities to get in the game. The great players, including Cruyff himself, always do their best work in and around the box. Put Van Basten on the wing and he won't get a sniff of the ball, neither would Maradona. Or Platini, Papin or Cantona.

Yes, but Cruyff's argument has always been that you can use your pace more effectively cutting in from the wing.
That's a story only fit for children. I don't agree at all.

But you do agree your speed is fundamental?
Yes. And that's why I keep working on it all the time. Even now, I still do extra sprint work every day in training and I'm trying to get even sharper. As a teenager in Bulgaria I could do the 100 metres in 11 seconds and I still can.

What's your main goal this year: a fifth consecutive Spanish League or the European Cup?
Without a doubt the fifth League. That's what really matters to the Barca fans, because at the end of the day there is nothing that gives them more satisfaction than getting one over on Real Madrid. That's what really makes them happy. After last year's defeat against Milan in the European Cup Final the fans turned out en masse to welcome us at the airport and they were singing 'No Pasa Nada La Liga es ganada!' [It doesn't matter, we've won the League]. And as I said, I'm convinced we can win it again. Real Madrid are a better team this year with a better coach [Jorge Valdano], but the hype surrounding them is ridiculous. It's much too early to say they'll be champions.

No chance of you 'doing a Laudrup' and moving to Madrid then?
Never. I'm sorry, there's just something about them that winds me up! They say that elephants never forget and I guess Bulgarians are the same. We've got incredibly long memories. How could I possibly play for Real after five years as public enemy number one in Madrid? Let's be honest though, if I had signed for Madrid five years ago – and I had nothing at all against them when Cruyff first signed me – I'd feel exactly the same way about Barcelona.

While we're on the subject of long memories, is the anecdote about you wearing the number four shirt for CSKA against Levski Sofia true?
You bet it is. In 1989 we scored five goals against them at home in the League of which I scored four. In the return fixture I wore the number four shirt instead of my usual number eight just to wind up the Levski players and fans, and to motivate the rest of my team. And it worked – we scored another five!

Of course, that all dates back to your first season at CSKA, when the 1985 Bulgarian Cup Final against Levski was abandoned after a pitch battle on and off the field. You were suspended for a year after that, weren't you?
Ten months and eight days exactly. But in those days the Bulgarian authorities didn't have a clue about football; none of them had ever played the game. They'd have struggled to tell you the difference between a football and a watermelon!

Now that you've won practically every honour in the game, are you still as ambitious as ever?
Of course. It would never enter my head that I've done it all. As long as I'm playing I'll be out to win every competition I take part in. That's one thing Cruyff and I do have in common. He once said that what he had done in the past was irrelevant, that he was still the most ambitious guy on the block despite all his achievements. I'm exactly the same. If you're not ambitious you might as well pack it all in.

Do I take that to mean you're out for revenge against your bete noire Milan?
Look, I intend to win the European Cup, but I've got no hang-ups about Milan and don't agree with the revenge scenario of our so-called inferiority complex. I'm still convinced that if we'd lost the League on that last Sunday of the season we'd have gone to Athens and beaten Milan. Given the circumstances, the anti-climax was almost inevitable.

And another Ballon d'Or?
It's certainly in the back of my mind. If I can win the League and European Cup with Barcelona and see Bulgaria almost qualified for England, who knows?

By the looks of it you haven't got to worry about competition from defenders. If Maldini couldn't get near you last year . . .
It's just really difficult for defenders to win it. It's an injustice that players like Koeman and Baresi have never won the award. I think they should be given a special Ballon d'Or, like Diego was recently.

Have you spoken to Maradona recently?
I spoke to him last week. He's really excited about the prospects at Racing Club. We spoke about the idea of setting up an international players' union. It's about time footballers had a say in the decisions that affect them. We're not interested in money, we're just asking that UEFA and FIFA start respecting us more.

WORLD SOCCER 1994 AWARDS

Every one a winner . . . Keir Radnedge with Paolo Maldini and (right) acting Milan President Adriano Galliani

Thank you, s

PAOLO MALDINI received the 1994 World Player of the Year award from *WORLD SOCCER* editor Keir Radnedge when he was in London for Milan's European Supercup first leg against Arsenal. acting Milan President Adriano Galliani collected the Team of the Year award on behalf of Milan.

On receiving his award, Maldini, the first defender to win the award, said: "I want to say a big thank you to *WORLD SOCCER*, its readers and writers, for voting me the magazine's World Player of the Year for 1994.

"It's a great honour for me to know that so many people consider me so highly. It's a particular matter of pride because defenders generally receive so much less attention from fans and the media than goalscorers. We are more in the engine room rather than taking the glory.

"I must admit that, for me, 1994 was the peak of my career so far. For any player to win the Champions Cup or to play in the World Cup Final would be enormous single matters of pride – but I was fortunate enough to be able to experience both those pinnacles of the game within a matter of weeks.

"Of course, whatever success I may have achieved is not merely down to my own credit. There are other people and influences on my career it would be only fair to acknowledge.

"Everyone always asks me about my father, Cesare, who captained Milan to their first Champions Cup victory in 1963 and is now our national under-21 coach.

"But I don't really remember him as a player. I played under his instructions in the Milan youth teams when I was a boy but really I learned more from him about being a man, about a correct attitude to the game, than from a technical point of view.

"Then, there has been my captain and colleague Franco Baresi. In my opinion he has received far too little recognition for his influence within the club and within Italian and international football. He is a man of few words but who 'talks' instead through his deeds out on the pitch.

"He really deserves to receive the sort of award I have received from *WORLD SOCCER*. But . . . thank you again!"

● *WORLD SOCCER*'s thanks for presentation assistance to David Miles and Paul Johnson on behalf of Arsenal and Paolo Tarozzi of Milan.

Big Mal . . . Maldini in action at Highbury

ays Maldini

SUPERCUP RETURN FOR MERSON

PAUL MERSON'S return after treatment for his various addictions – drugs, drink and gambling – was the highlight of a predictably tight night at Highbury in the European Supercup first leg.

Merson entered the game as a substitute to a rousing ovation with 15 minutes to play. It was his first appearance since November 3, but he had no more effect than anyone else in breaking the stalemate.

"We got a bit of pride back," said Arsenal manager George Graham. "That was important for us because we have a had a bad time. We did not create many chances but then neither did Milan. I think Paul came through it pretty well. I wanted to put him in gradually. It was a very emotional night for him."

Arsenal had perhaps more half-chances in a game spoiled by untidy passing. But Milan coach Fabio Capello thought the European and Italian champions unfortunate not to take a victory back to the Stadio Meazza for the second leg. Capello said: "We had chances to win the game, but Arsenal made it hard for us. We had to change our normal tactical style to cope with them."

Arsenal's first threat came in the eighth minute but Ian Selley's deflected corner was miskicked wide by Kevin Campbell. Four minutes later and it was Milan's turn to frown when Marco Simone's fierce cross-shot sailed just wide of the far post. .

Arsenal's leading scorer, Ian Wright, playing his last game before starting a four-match league suspension, tried hard to bow out with a goal. His best moment came eight minutes before half-time when he raced from inside Arsenal territory to the edge of the Milan box and unleashed a sharp drive at Sebastiano Rossi.

The second half followed a simiular pattern with a Lee Dixon drive and Selley header narrowly off target before Savicevic engineered a counter-attack which ended with Simone, alone in front of David Seaman, clippping his shot wide. Seaman was then tested by a fierce free-kick from Demetrio Albertini before Merson gave the Highbury faithful the opportunity to raise their biggest cheer of the night.

● FROM next season, the Supercup is likely to be a single-match curtain-raiser to the European season.

TRYING TIME ON THE INTERNET

E-MAIL subscribers who had problems reaching us on the Internet after last month's appeal for contacts should try this address instead on CompuServe UK – 74427.110. Thanks to all those replying through Delphi, the address for which is keirad@delphi.com.

BAYERN'S PROBLEMS PILE UP

BAYERN MUNICH'S bid for the Champions Cup looks doomed after a disastrous start to 1995.

First Italian coach Giovanni Trapattoni confirmed speculation that he would be going home at the season's end, then a variety of problems struck down Lothar Matthaus, Jean-Pierre Papin and Alain Sutter.

Trapattoni said: "My family found it difficult to adjust to life here. If we had all been five or six years younger perhaps it would have been easier. It's been interesting and enjoyable but one season is enough."

Trapattoni may not even see out his contract if Bayern fall to IFK Gothenburg in the Champions Cup quarter-finals, a distinct possibility.

Skipper and driving force Matthaus has been ruled out for the rest of the season after tearing his left achilles tendon in a friendly against Arminia Bielefeld.

The same day Papin underwent what was expected to be minor knee surgery in Marseille. Instead, surgeons found more complications than expected and he was ruled out for two months.

Finally, Swiss World Cup winger Sutter was admitted to hospital after suffering food poisoning.

● BAYERN face IFK in the Champions Cup quarter-finals on March 1 and 15. For the full European cup competitions draw, see Results, starting page 55.

Now or never

Keir Radnedge meets the Champions Cup coach who faces a race against time

ROGER GUSTAFSSON takes his time. He weighs each question, then he weighs his opinion, then he weighs each word as he answers. So, when he says: "We must try to win the European Cup with this team this season or the chance is gone," you know he means exactly and most precisely just that.

Coach of IFK Gothenburg for five years now, after seven years in the youth section, Gustafsson has grown up in football terms with many of his players but he has no illusions about IFK's place in the international scheme of things. He says: "Of course, we try to win every competition in which we take part. But our situation now is especially important.

"Everyone knows that our best players in Sweden will always, sooner or later, go abroad. Our football is part-time but they have the ambition to be fully professional and, abroad, they can earn much more money. After this season we will lose two, three or four of our best players.

"So then we will have to build a new team and bring in new, young players. It will take four or five years for them to gain the experience to return to the level we are at now.

"So that's why I say we must try to win the European Cup now: this team will never have another chance."

It's also true that this team – with coveted individuals including Jesper Blomqvist, Joachim Bjorklund, Magnus Erlingmark and Pontus Kamark – will never have a better chance. Gustafsson respects Bayern Munich as quarter-final opponents but he also knows that German teams do not like playing Swedish teams.

He believes IFK have a realistic chance of beating Bayern and reaching the semi-finals. And then . . . well, IFK have won the UEFA Cup twice in the past 13 years, so why not the Champions Cup as well?

Gustafsson, a son of Gothenburg who played for local rivals GAIS but never for IFK, puts his finger on the precise technical and stylistic reasons why he believes his last-chance team present such a serious threat to Bayern Munich's ambitions of a fourth Champions Cup.

He says: "We have had quite some experience playing against German teams. They don't like our way of playing football because we don't play the German Way. We play British – and we make no secret of it.

"German teams know that. They know how we play. But they still don't like it and they find it hard to change their game. Of course, in the German league they play usually with a sweeper and two markers at the back and they don't find that very effective against our style of 4-4-2 with zone defence.

"Also, we like to mark the man on the ball as far up the pitch as possible. German teams don't like that because they like to have time and space to build their game from the back. And, in the Bundesliga, almost everyone plays the same way so they are not used to having to adapt to different tactical situations and styles.

"Against that, we know that German teams can be very dangerous on the counter-attack and this is a factor about their game which we sometimes find difficult to cope with."

But tactical shapes are not the area in which Gustafsson considers he may hold the upper hand. The other is in preparation, which comes as a surprise and even appears to fly in the face of logic when you consider that the German league restarts in mid-February while IFK must wait until April before the Swedish domestic championship opens. By then, the duels with Bayern on March 1 and 15 will be part of football history.

But Gustafsson being the man he is, you know this is no lurid flight of football fantasy. Ever so patiently, he states the second part of his case.

"We know all about how Bayern Munich play and, because this is our close-season, we have been able to plan our preparation. We have chosen where to go for training, which teams to play against, thinking always with the games against Bayern in mind.

"But Bayern cannot do this. They have a winter break, too. But first they have been playing indoor football – we could have done this but we didn't want to – then they will have to concentrate on their league starting again two weeks before the European Cup. They have no time to prepare for us; we have all the time to prepare for them."

Modestly, Gustafsson shrugs off praise for the impressive, if under-stated, performances IFK gave in the Champions League stage. He admired Manchester United's ability and cup-winning potential and he was under no illusions about the reality behind Barcelona's nervy display in the last group match, when IFK drew 1-1 in Nou Camp and might have scored more than Stefan Rehn's late goal.

He says: "After the first game against United, when they beat us 4-2 at Old Trafford, I thought they would go on to win the cup. They were very good, were well-organised and worked hard. But then they had big problems with injuries and that meant they then had problems with the foreigners rule and could not always use all their best players together. I saw they had some good young players but they needed more experience. Without those problems,

Winning ways . . . Gustafsson believes his Swedish stars can lift the Champions Cup

Cashing in . . . Jesper Blomqvist could be set for a big money move

'Our best players always go abroad. That's why we must try to win the European Cup now: this team will never have another chance'

I'm sure they would have qualified for the quarter-finals.

"As for the last game we had against Barcelona – we had some opportunities to score goals but I would say that, really, Barcelona were the better team."

Maybe, but it was IFK who finished top of the group to enhance the newly-accepted high status of Swedish football following the national team's semi-final appearances in the last European Championship and World Cup.

Yet, it does not seem so far back that attendances in Swedish football were in apparently terminal decline and the federation chopped and changed the league system frantically to try to manufacture more crowd-pulling drama.

Reviewing the course of the winds of change, Gustafsson says: "In Swedish football, we have always been ambitious to learn. We always want to improve our standards. So we have looked abroad a great deal at the way things were done in other countries. We don't think of Sweden as being a great football nation but that is no reason not to keep trying to make things better in our game.

"Today I think we have at last found the best methods for working with our players and helping them become better players. We have come a long way when you consider that in Sweden we have no professional football. Even at my club, though we could afford to pay full-time professionals, we choose not to. We think our way is right for us and for Swedish football. Our players are all part-timers. That is, they work at a job or study five or six hours a day – in the mornings – and then they train in the afternoon and evening.

"Our players certainly train as much as if they were at a professional club."

The turning point for Swedish football, which had been on a long decline after the euphoric runners-up achievement behind Brazil at the 1958 World Cup they hosted, was in the late 1970s. That was when Bob Houghton made his mark with Malmo – becoming the first Swedish team to reach the Champions Cup Final when they lost 1-0 to Nottingham Forest in 1979 – and when the young Sven-Goran Eriksson triumphed with IFK in the UEFA Cup three years later.

"The English way suited Swedish players," says Gustafsson, "because they like to work and they are easy to organise. The English way of playing 4-4-2 with a zone defence was ideal. That's what we are using now."

First the system, then the stars. In that order. Gustafsson confirmed my belief that the recent Swedish success at the highest levels has been due to sensible coaching which places the emphasis on getting the simple things right. He says: "First we have a tactical system in which each player has a responsibility to the team. After that a player such as Tomas Brolin, for example, in the national side, can provide something extra for the team.

"In southern Europe and central Europe it's always been the other way round. They looked first for one player around whom a team could build the game. A playmaker. But now I think even these other countries are starting to change. The team has to come first."

Organisation is the key to IFK's continuing success. Gustafsson carries with him a daily schedule in which he notes down all the appointments with officials, television, press. He takes it all in his long stride and feels he has let himself down if he is a minute or two late moving from one meeting to another. But then, facing their particular pressures, IFK have to be well-organised.

Not only do they play their normal league season from spring through to autumn but they compete in Europe after the end and before the start of their domestic programme. "Our players have less holiday than full-time professionals in other countries," says Gustafsson.

The reward for the club is to have made money through the Champions League far beyond anything anyone in Swedish football had ever dreamed of. To Gustafsson, the appearance and points money is more important to clubs such as IFK than it is to the likes of Milan and Barcelona. He says: "These are great clubs, they will always make big money. But for us, and other European clubs at our level who are big at home but not so big abroad, it's different."

Not that money is the answer to every problem.

Captain's example . IFK skipper Pontus Kamark

Gustafsson says: "We have invested the money we have made in the Champions League over the last two years in training facilities. But we can't invest in players as you might imagine. It's not possible in Sweden.

"We can have maybe 13 top players. But no more. We can't be like, say, Milan, and have almost two teams of internationals. Because the Swedish game is part-time, player No 14 will want to go to another club. He wants to play first-team football, he wants to get into the national team and so he hopes he gets a transfer abroad. In other countries the reserve players earn very good money which is a form of compensation they will accept, certainly for a while. But with us that's not possible.

"Thus the money we make from the Champions League we invest in making the players we have, better."

So, with IFK, what you see is what they've got. The first team from the Champions League plus a couple of new arrivals. Two are juniors, one is former Trelleborgs midfielder Mats Lilienberg, returning home after sitting on the subs bench at 1860 Munich for a year, and the other is Stefan Landberg from Osters Vaxjo. Their starting turn may have to wait a few months until the likes of Blomqvist have followed the lure south of full-time professionalism and the money which goes with it.

At the other end of the scale, IFK will have to think, at some time, of finding a successor to goalkeeper Thomas Ravelli. He and Blomqvist represent the interesting extremes of personality which Gustafsson has blended so successfully into his winning formula.

Gustafsson says: "Thomas is so experienced. He's been around here so many years he's like a daddy to the rest of the team. Also, Ravelli is not only a great character to have around the club but a very complex and interesting person.

"As for Blomqvist, he was very good as a boy at ice hockey and skiing and football so he had to choose. He comes from the far north of Sweden. People who come from there are typically very quiet types. Very different from Ravelli!

"Now he's been with us a while I think Jesper has become more talkative. He's like Ravelli, much more intelligent than the majority of footballers. Since he's been with us he has been trying to study at our highest level of mathematics but I don't think he's really had enough time."

Come the end of the season and Blomqvist's mathematics will no doubt stand him in good stead when the German, Italian, English and Spanish clubs come calling.

Gustafsson, however, has no intention of joining the likely exodus. He's at home in Gothenburg, where he grew up, where he played football, where he works now. He says: "I do like going abroad, seeing other places, other countries. But I always like to come home."

Who knows, one day he might even come home with the European Cup.

BY GRAHAM TURNER

Mid-season table-toppers Real Madrid have rediscovered the power to provoke panic among their rivals

Real in control

Bayern bound . . . Emil Kostadinov is off to Germany on loan

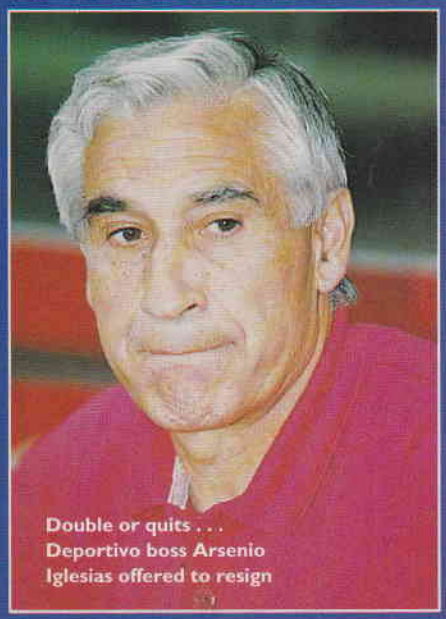
HALFWAY HOUSE in the Spanish league. Real Madrid have the honorary but honour-less title of winter champions and a marginal lead in a marathon due to finish when other nations will be basking in the midnight sun.

The result of Real's presidential elections will be known a few days after *WORLD SOCCER* appears on the bookshelves and the first phase of the tortuous procedure suggested that Florentino Perez could soon be parking his bum in the Bernabeu boardroom. For every signature obtained by Ramon Mendoza, he obtained two. Opinion polls confirm that the end of the Mendoza era could be nigh.

But maybe the most interesting achievement by Jorge Valdano's resuscitated team is that of having recovered the capacity to provoke crises among its rivals. Barcelona were deeply wounded by the 5-0 defeat in Madrid and when, a week later, Real travelled to Riazor without Laudrup, Michel and Redondo yet obtained a merited 0-0 draw by outmanoeuvring Deportivo in midfield, the seeds of crisis were sown in La Coruna.

Skipper Fran, whose monosyllables have exasperated Galician journalists for the last decade, suddenly had a rush of blood to the tongue and slammed coach Arsenio Iglesias for "over-conservative tactics". His older brother Jose Ramon, whose place on the subs' bench might have something to do with his rancour, tipped fuel on the flames. The off-loading of Emil Kostadinov to Bayern Munich was deemed incomprehensible, especially as the imminence of Bebeto's departure had been underlined by the fruitless attempt to sign Brazilian striker Amoroso from Guarani.

Arsenio was roundly jeered by the Riazor crowd when his last bid to defeat Real was not to send on another striker but to reinforce the midfield. The 64-year-old coach felt so betrayed that within hours he had tendered his resignation. Club president Augusto Cesar Lendoiro rapidly turned it down but Arsenio is adamant that he will hang up his blackboard duster at the end of the season. A certain John Toshack is short-listed as a successor.



Double or quits . . . Deportivo boss Arsenio Iglesias offered to resign

Only time will tell us how deeply Deportivo's title challenge will be affected by the Real match and the inner turmoil it caused.

Fortunately, the whims of the Spanish fixture list decreed that both they and Barcelona could sweat off their post-Real blues by beating Logrones, the side which marched proudly into the record books by outstripping Mallorca's achievement of playing 16 matches without a win. Their 1-0 defeat by Deportivo took their run to 18 and the previous week's 3-0 defeat in Barcelona allowed them to hang on to the distinction of not having scored an away goal all season. They could not even score in the Copa del Rey, where they were beaten 1-0 and 2-0 by Second Division strugglers Badajoz.

Victory over Logrones deceived Barcelona into thinking they had exorcised the ghosts of the Bernabeu stadium, but the following week's laborious and fortunate 2-2 draw in Albacete underlined contrasts between this campaign and the flowing football seen in previous years.

Romario's abrupt departure meant a return to the centre-forward-less style which had brought success but the question is whether Gheorghe Hagi and the newly-promoted Igor Korneyev are the right sort of players to make it work. The Barcelona board looked for oil to pour on troubled waters, but could come up with nothing better than an extension of Johan Cruyff's contract until 1997. A very laudable demonstration of stability, one might think. But the fact that Cruyff's contract is automatically renewed every season unless otherwise stipulated in writing converts the gesture into just that. A gesture. With Ronald Koeman anxious to decide his future and players such as Bakero, Eusebio and Beguiristain also terminating their contracts, Cruyff predicts four or five new arrivals at Nou Camp next season, with Dennis Bergkamp once again top of the shopping list. "Whatever has to be spent will be spent," he says.

Within days, the Valencia president Francisco Roig took a leaf out of the Barcelona book by extending Carlos Alberto Parreira's contract by one year. Deep in the heart of the paella country, eyebrows were raised . . .

Roig and his henchmen argue "our coach is champion of the world and that is unquestionable evidence". *WORLD SOCCER* readers will only need a few minutes reflecting on the club successes of world-champion managers to question Roig's evidence. It might also be mentioned that, had Brazil equalled Valencia's run of nine matches without a win, Parreira might have headed back to the Far East before you could say United Arab Emirates.

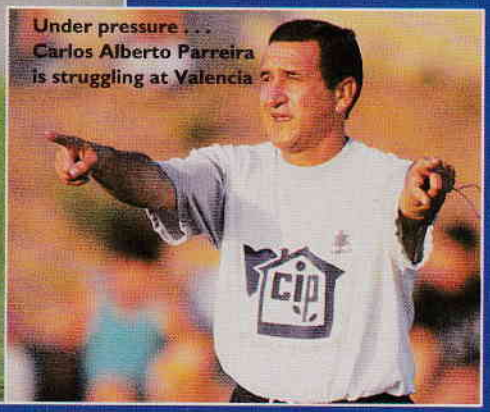
Talking tough . . . Deportivo skipper Fran had some harsh words for coach Iglesias

Frustrations have been reflected by an appalling disciplinary record and they dropped into the relegation zone after a stormy 3-1 defeat in Zaragoza which generated two penalties (Diego Simeone fluffed his for Atletico), 12 bookings and three red cards.

On the same day, the Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Seville was the scene for a passionate local derby with both Sevilla and Betis in the top six at the start of play. A somewhat disappointing match was decided by a controversial penalty converted by Alexis to give Lorenzo Serra Ferrer's Betis a valuable win. The former Mallorca manager has thus far worked minor miracles for the green-and-whites and, along with the other surprise package, Compostela, has staked convincing claims for the newly-promoted clubs while many of the established favourites have been flagging.

All of which has set an amazingly appetising table for Real Madrid. Deep in the uncertainties raised by the presidential vacuum and with sacred cows Emilio Butragueno and Rafael Martin Vazquez relegated to the subs' bench, they would normally be wracked by doubts and internal bickering. But one thing which Jorge Valdano has quietly succeeded in doing has been to return Real to their role of yesteryear.

This season they have again become the point of reference – the mirror which their rivals are peering into and suddenly becoming aware of their own defects.



Under pressure . . . Carlos Alberto Parreira is struggling at Valencia

The Valencians are beginning to throw as much vitriol as the Brazilian critics did during the World Cup and some of Parreira's own players have joined in. Midfielder Roberto told him he had "no **!*£@*! idea" when he was substituted during the goal-less home draw with Espanol and was promptly informed by Parreira that he wouldn't play again for a month. The other players disagreed with Parreira's decision, as they have done with his playing system.

Repeated attempts to prise Brazilian striker Paulo Viola from Corinthians haven't improved the morale of resident attackers Lubo Penev and Oleg Salenko, both of whom are keen to leave the club. The net result of Parreira's work so far is that Valencia are, once again, under-achieving.

Believe it or not, the same applies to Atletico Madrid whose manager Jorge D'Alessandro – yawn – is threatened with a rapid return to his former profession of radio commentator. President Jesus Gil has roasted his players so often that they seem to fear the ball will scorch their feet.

ON THE MOVE

THE TRANSFER MARKET re-opened for the month prior to the January 15 deadline, but moves were restricted to players who had played five games or fewer with their previous club in the same division. More loans than transfers and more significant departures than arrivals reflect the reality of a Spanish league where clubs no longer have money to burn.

Player	Pos	From	To	Fee
ROMARIO	*F*	*Barcelona*	*Flamengo*	*£3,000,000*
Luis **GARCIA**	M	Real Sociedad	America (Mex)	£800,000
Hugo **PEREZ**	M	Independiente (Arg)	Sporting Gijon	£500,000
JOSE MARI	M	Osasuna	Barcelona	£500,000
*Emil **KOSTADINOV***	*F*	*La Coruna*	*Bayern Munich*	*£250,000*
*Ilie **DUMITRESCU***	*M*	*Tottenham*	*Sevilla*	*£250,000*
CAFU	*D*	*Sao Paulo*	*Real Zaragoza*	*£175,000*
Dimitri **KUZNETSOV**	M	Espanol	Lleida	£125,000
*Jan **URBAN***	*F*	*Osasuna*	*Real Valladolid*	*£75,000*
*Pedro **RIESCO***	*F*	*La Coruna*	*Real Valladolid*	*£50,000*
*Luis **CEMBRANOS***	*D*	*Barcelona*	*Espanol*	*£50,000*
*Javi **DELGADO***	*M*	*Barcelona B*	*Logrones*	*£25,000*
*Jose **MOLINA***	*G*	*Valencia*	*Albacete*	*£5,000*
*Javier **NAVARRO***	*D*	*Valencia*	*Logrones*	*£5,000*
Gregorio **FONSECA**	F	Espanol	Albacete	free
Paco **LLORENTE**	F	Real Madrid	Compostella	free
*Tab **RAMOS***	*M*	*Real Betis*	*Nuevo Leon (Mex)*	*loan*

(Loan moves in italics)

Romario's hollow farewell

THE MOST REMARKABLE aspect of Romario's move to Flamengo was not that the Brazilian had gone home but that nobody in Barcelona shed a tear.

And let's be honest, we're not talking about a two-peseta footballer. Nor are we talking about a money-stricken club forced to cash in on their most valuable asset.

Yet Barcelona halved their asking price and all but pushed Romario on the plane before you could say PSV Eindhoven. Arguably the best striker in the world had been ushered out with little short of 'good riddance' on Catalan lips.

Romario simply walked around the training pitch in the shadow of Nou Camp and in response to the 'adios' received no more than a handshake or pat on the back. When Michael Laudrup left last summer he needed rib protectors to cope with all the hugging from team-mates.

● WHEN ARSENIO IGLESIAS tendered his resignation *(see main story)*, Javier Clemente's national side were in rain-drenched La Coruna preparing for the friendly against Uruguay.

Clemente spoke up in his usual brash fashion to defend Arsenio "because he is a good tactician, a nice man and because he is Spanish". Ironically, the goals which secured Spain's 2-2 draw were scored by Donato (Brazilian) and Pizzi (Argentinian).

Clemente once again sprang surprises. Back came local midfielder Fran to earn his first cap for 11 months and in for his second-half debut came Sebastian Losada.

Losada, 27, enjoyed something of a golden age when Clemente was boss at Espanol, but did not fare so well at Atletico Madrid or Sevilla. When it looked as though his career was going to be definitively derailed, he was offered a move north to Vigo, where he has not been an immovable fixture in the Celta line-up.

Despite only four goals all season, Clemente called him into the national squad, still obsessed with finding a viable – and younger – alternative to Julio Salinas.

Losada is the 19th striker to be used by Clemente since September 1992.

● HRISTO STOICHKOV was banned for two games by the Spanish FA for violent conduct following his sending-off in Barcelona's 5-0 thrashing by Real Madrid.

● DEPORTIVO failed to complete the signing of Brazilian Amoroso from Atletico Guarani even though the two clubs had reportedly agreed a $4.8million fee for the 20-year-old striker.

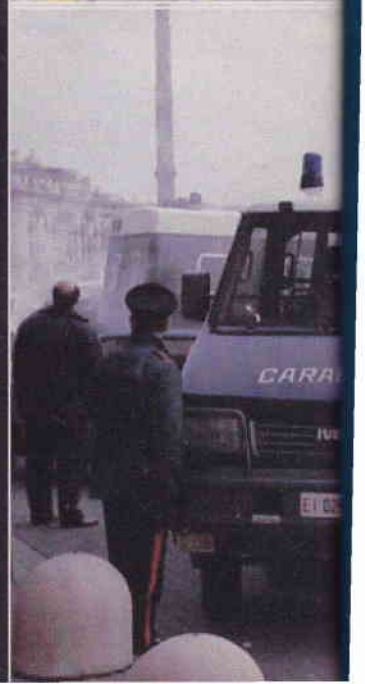
● BEBETO could be joining his World Cup striking partner Romario back in Brazil. Rio side Botafogo are reported to be keen to secure the Deportivo striker's signature at the end of the season for around £2million.

● *Results and tables start on page 54.*

The murder of a young fan at the Genoa-Milan game has sent shockwaves throughout Italy

BY PADDY AGNEW

The killing fields



ITALIAN SOCCER shuddered to a stunned halt on the first Sunday of February, following the killing one week earlier of 24-year-old Genoa fan, Vincenzo Spagnolo, stabbed to death by a Milan fan before the Genoa-Milan game.

The suspension of all national sport on February 5 seemed like a fine gesture, serving as a mark of respect for the dead youth while expressing the sporting world's disgust with the manner in which he died.

Such was the white hot emotional charge generated by Vincenzo Spagnolo's needless death, however, that the sports authorities had little option but to bring the whole circus to a halt, at least for one Sunday.

When emotions have calmed, however, Italian soccer will require more than handsome symbolic gestures with which to confront a soccer violence problem that seems to be on the increase.

There was something unreal, over emotional and out of proportion about the immense furore created by Spagnolo's death. After all, since 1979 six people have died in soccer related violence in Italy. Furthermore, Vincenzo Spagnolo was the fourth fan to be stabbed to death in or around an Italian soccer stadium in that period.

The difference, of course, about Spagnolo's death was that it led to serious rioting which not only forced the suspension of the Genoa-Milan game but which also held the city of Genoa hostage until 11 o'clock that night. Not for the first time this season, soccer violence had spilled out onto normally peaceful Italian streets.

Given the importance of the incident, the Spagnolo killing merits retelling. Spagnolo, an unemployed fan who had just completed his year of military service, was waiting for his girlfriend just outside Genoa's Marassi stadium when he became involved in a scuffle between Genoa and Milan fans, some three-quarters of an hour before kick off. Perhaps as many as 40 of the 700 Milan fans who had travelled for the game attacked Genoa fans. In the ensuing melee, Spagnolo suffered a mortal knife blow just below the heart.

Anyone who knows Italian soccer will know that many fans take portable radios with them to the match in order to remain informed about what is happening at the other games. By half-time of the Genoa-Milan game, everyone at the Genoa end of the stadium had heard the news that a Genoa fan had died, following a stabbing incident.

When the players came out to start the second half, they were faced with such a barrage of bottles, sticks and stones from the Genoa 'kop' that captains Franco Baresi of Milan and Vincenzo Torrente of Genoa appealed to referee Gianni Beschin, arguing that it was simply wrong to go ahead with the game in such a dangerous and angry climate. Beschin consulted with officials from both clubs and (by telephone) with his own boss, referee chief Paolo Casarin, and then suspended the match.

Less than 24 hours later, however, Spagnolo's alleged killer had been arrested. 18-year-old apprentice gardener Simone Barbaglia, who was arrested at four o'clock on Monday morning, confessed to the killing while in police custody, claiming that he had acted in self-defence in the middle of a mass fight.

Barbaglia had been identified thanks to the quick thinking of a senior police officer on duty at the match. The policeman had become suspicious when he noticed three of the Milan fans exchanging their waterproof 'Barbour' jackets. Later, Barbaglia admitted that when he and his friends heard that the fan had died, they had become afraid and had not only exchanged coats but had also hidden the killer knife in an old bottle in the Marassi toilets where, indeed, police found it on the Monday.

Pressing charges against the confessed killer Barbaglia may prove relatively straightforward. Solving Italy's growing soccer violence problem will be a lot more complex.

Just one year ago, Sicilian Salvatore Moschella died when jumping from the Catania-Messina train as he attempted to get away from marauding hooligans. Last April, nine policemen and two fans were seriously injured following rioting at the Genoa derby game. In November of this season, 10 people were hospitalised following incidents at the Napoli-Bari game.

The most recent episode prior to the Spagnolo killing, however, is the most worrying. Senior police officier Giovanni Selmin suffered serious facial injuries following a premeditated attack by AS Roma fans prior to the Brescia-Roma game. Subsequent police enquiries point to the involvement of members of the neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI, now National Alliance), one of the senior partners in Silvio Berlusconi's seven-month right-wing coalition government.

Also believed to have been involved in the Brescia incident, at least in the planning, was Maurizio Boccacci, another right-wing extremist and founder of the 'Movimento Politico Occidentale', a grouping which numbered many 'Naziskins' among its membership.

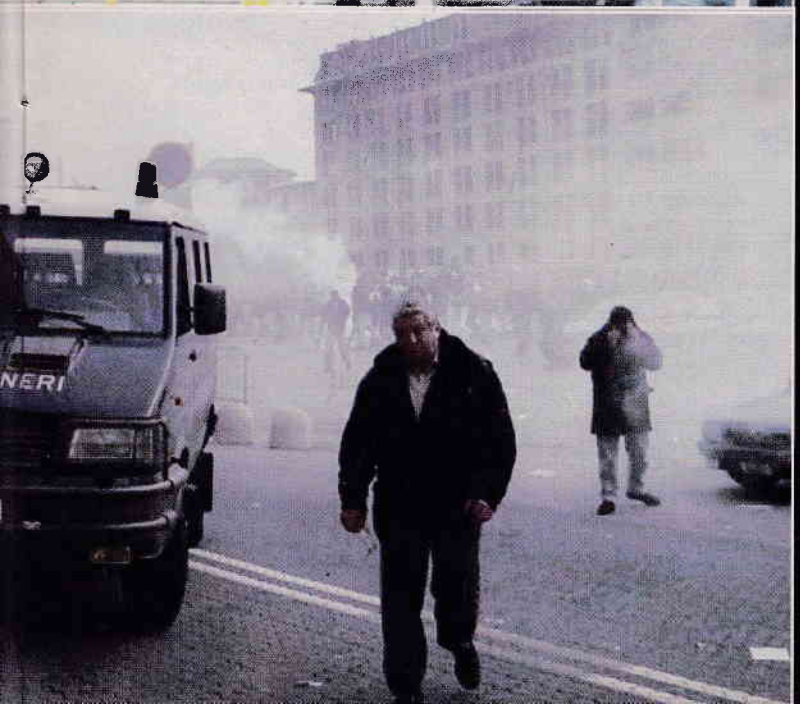
For the time being, and in a manner only all too familiar to British readers, the public debate about soccer hooliganism rages. Among ideas being aired are the banning of all organised fans travelling to away matches, the issue of identity cards to all supporters and live screening in a fan's own city of an away game.

One thorny issue raised by Italian police authorities however concerns the enigmatic relationship between several big clubs and their bands of die-hard organised supporters, known as 'ultras'.

Police believe that clubs too easily tolerate "over enthusiasm" on the part of such supporters who are a privileged breed, enjoying cheap tickets and often free travel to away games.

Clearly, violence is now an issue that Italian soccer will have to address seriously and comprehensively. In many sociological senses, Italian society trails Anglo-Saxon societies by 10 to 15 years. In the case of soccer, this may sadly be true. The debate now ongoing in Italy is similar to that in Britain, 15 years ago.

As the fundamental moral values of Italian society move from those of a rural, peasant culture to an urbanised, materially wealthy industrial power, so are social attitudes and behaviour destined to change – for the worse, perhaps, at least in the case of soccer supporters.



Troubled times . . . Chaotic scenes before, during and after the Genoa-Milan game; Milan's Montenegrin maestro Dejan Savicevic (below)

Milan back in the hunt

THE GENOA killing took the shine off an intriguing championship contest that is beginning to look like the most open one of the last decade.

January defeats for Juventus against Cagliari and Torino, in the immediate aftermath of their top-of-the-table wins against Parma and AS Roma, served to remind us once more that there is no all-dominant side around this year capable of winning the contest in the imperious manner of the Milan side of the last three years.

That Milan side, too, may yet force a bout of Europe-wide hat-eating among those scribes who wrote them off following their disastrous autumn.

Despite all their problems, the reigning champions managed to go unbeaten in the league for all of December and January, prompting their coach Fabio Capello to say:

"We haven't abdicated yet. From here on you'll see a Milan fighting to get back into the title contest . . . Juventus had better be careful, not just of us but also of Parma, Lazio and Roma."

And so say all of us.

● FIORENTINA have insisted that their German midfielder Stefan Effenberg, currently on loan to Borussia Moenchengladbach, will be returning to Italy at the end of the season.

● *Results and tables start on page 55.*

Power games at Inter

EVERY SEASON, Italian soccer is usually good for at least one Grade A, genuine Opera Buffo story. This year, it would seem that Internazionale have offered to provide the entertainment with a long-running saga concerning the club's future.

It seems that current President Ernesto Pellegrini wants out. It seems that Massimo Moratti, son of Angelo, wants in. Angelo Moratti was club President during the side's greatest Champions Cup and League-winning days, back in the '60s.

There are those sentimental Inter fans who feel that the return of the famous name might bring back some of the even more famous, far off success. There are also those more prosaic souls who point out that Massimo Moratti's petrol interests (or the bank accounts accrued therefrom) might prove useful for the rebuilding of a demoralised Inter who are currently struggling just above the relegation zone.

The problem is that neither Moratti, Massimo, nor Pellegrini, Ernesto, can seem to get their acts together. One day, Moratti says he wants to buy and a day later, he sounds less interested. One day, Pellegrini says he wants to sell and a day later, it is not so clear.

There is probably a deal of horse trading going on. If you pick up the phone too often and seem too enthusiastic about purchasing, then the asking price (the figure of $55million has been put about) might go up by four or five million. On the other hand, if you pick up the phone too often and sound too desperate to sell, then the selling price might go down by four or five million.

By next issue, the horse trading may be over. By then, Inter may well be owned by Massimo Moratti. Watch this space.

● PORTUGUESE international Luis Figo has signed for Parma after previously being a target for Juventus. The 22-year-old midfielder from Sporting Lisbon was reported last month to have been signed by the league-leaders, but Parma now claim to have secured the player on a three-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Parma man . . . Luis Figo chose Parma over Juventus

France

Suaudeau's stars shine

THAT heartening victory in Holland, after so many recent disappointments, showed there was life in the old fighting cock yet. But before that, Nantes' devastating 3-0 win in the Parc des Princes against Paris Saint Germain induced mixed feelings in French neutrals.

Good for the remarkable young team Jean-Claude Suaudeau, indestructible mentor of Nantes, has got together; even if the first sending off, in particular, opened the way to the win. But it didn't give much encouragement for the prospects of Paris SG in the Champions Cup. Nor, for that matter, did all that talk about George Weah being off to Milan.

Maybe he will, maybe he won't, but to read so much about it at a time when his club was in line both for the French Championship – Nantes permitting – and the Champions Cup was surely a nasty low blow. A matter, one would think, of indeed bringing the game into disrepute. So much so that you wonder why UEFA didn't come roaring in with sanctions and severities.

"The operation can be defined as completed," wrote an Italian daily sports paper. The only detail, it pursued, was whether Weah, who as we all know is Liberian, could be classified as a French national. Otherwise Milan might be forced to jettison their Croatian international, Zvonimir Boban.

Weah isn't starving. He has, he says, three apartments in New York, a restaurant in Brooklyn, two houses in Liberia. "My wife looks after the money. She's very able and intelligent."

Significantly, perhaps, Weah also says: "From the time I fled Liberia, I've understood that it isn't difficult for me to adjust. Nothing and nobody frightens me. I'm ambitious, and for this reason, I think I can play at a good level, anywhere. Also because I am sure that God will always protect me."

There's an interesting analogy between Weah and another gifted African, who came out on the winning side against him for Nantes: Japhet N'doram. Partly because both are stars who come from an African country which has produced few in the past. And because both in their time played in Cameroon, for Yaounde Thunder. Weah, indeed, still speaks of Roger Milla as "my master," whom he hopes to emulate by playing on till he is 40.

Nantes playmaker . . . Japhet N'doram

It was in fact N'doram who replaced Weah at the Thunder when George made his crucial move to Monaco. Playmaker for Nantes, 28 years old – which he, emphatically, declares is not as old as all that! – Japhet ascribes his excellent form this season to the fact that he's been free from injury.

He comes, in fact, from Chad, and signed his first club form at the age of 10, with Tourbillon of N'Djamena. Teamwork, he stresses, is the secret of Nantes' success. After three years, the players understand one another instinctively. Certainly his combinations with the prolific young French international, Patrice Loko, bear testimony to that.

This is his fifth season with Nantes, and things didn't work out too smoothly, at first. "I was the foreigner too many," he recalls. "I had to be very patient." And then the chance presented itself, with an injury to the Belgian, Vercauteren. "I've had the luck to come to Nantes, who play a style similar to what I'd always known and practised in Chad. Here, the only things that count are teamwork and understanding." But Japhet is not only a master of the defence-splitting pass; he can also run through it, thanks to his control at speed.

And Suaudeau, voted best manager of the year for the third time by a top weekly magazine? With typical modesty and generosity, he insists that credit be given, too, to the long-serving previous manager of Nantes, Jose Arribas the man who, he feels, built the basis on which present success has been founded.

Less well known but fast making a name is Roland Gransart, whom the same magazine named as the best Division II manager of the year. He feels his team had already shown improvement in the second half of last season – Gueugnon are hardly fashionable, but their football is attractive. This season, however, says Gransart, fewer errors have been made and the side is more effective. The previous season, Gueugnon just lacked something.

The secret? Just that they've worked hard, he says, and become more "realistic." The players are "young, perfectable, and they are improving." Gueugnon, he points out, rely on youth and on keeping the same players.

"Gueugnon have the smallest budget in the division. It's therefore more difficult than elsewhere to attract players. When I got here, four years ago, therefore, the directors and I decided upon a youth policy. The only possible one. But look: I'm not complaining. On the contrary, life for a manager is fine, there. The conditions of work, both the facilities and the human material, are extraordinary. And then, there has never been the shadow of a problem at the club, ever since I have been here." Lucky man.

Milan man . . . PSG's George Weah could be set for a summer move to Italy

Whether the brutal assassination of the former President of the Bastia club, Jean Francois Filippi, had anything to do with the horrific disaster of May 5, 1992, when 17 died at the Furiani stadium, we may never know. Filippi was responsible for erecting the temporary stand which collapsed on the occasion of a match against Marseille. But Corsica being Corsica, its violence and feuds an historic commonplace, Filippi's death by rifle shot remains a mystery.

Shocking and unforgivable must be the words to describe what went on in that appalling Saint Etienne-Bordeaux fracas. No excuse whatsoever for the brutal assault by a now repentant Didier Senac. His victim, the Polish international, Piotr Swierczewski, had viciously punched Zinedine Zidane in the back of the head. But that was no excuse for exacting lynch law, stamping on the Pole's head. The fact that the referee saw nothing may have been a contributing factor. But that's no extenuation, either.

ANDRE DUCLOS

Marseille debt misery

DEBT-RIDDEN Marseille's plans for an immediate return to the First Division appear doomed. The 1993 European champions are almost certain to go into receivership and face relegation to the regionalised Third Division.

Marseille, relegated last year for trying to fix a league match, have debts of between £25million and £30million. Further claims against the club could cost them £6million and put Marseille's finances in an impossible position.

New owner Pierre Cangioni, who recently bought Bernard Tapie's majority stake for one franc, asked the city's commercial courts for three months to organise a rescue package.

This was refused and Marseille are now almost certain to go into receivership. Under league rules, a club which goes into receivership faces relegation to the regionalised National Division.

- LILLE have signed 26-year-old Senegalese international Adama Cissa, who has been playing in Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.
- FORMER French international Gerald Passi has signed for Nagoya Grampus Eight in Japan.

Belgium

Hard times

THE CONTRAST in fortunes between the two clubs in Liege could hardlly be greater.

While Standard pursue their ninth league title, neighbours Racing Club, have hit hard times. Not only are they favourites to go down – along with Ostende – but they can no longer play home games on their own ground.

The burgomaster of Liege has decreed that the crumbling Stade Rocourt is no longer fit for use and there have not been many critics of his decision. The electricity for the floodlights is faulty and the stands and terraces were, he said, unsafe.

The consequence for the club has been disastrous. Forced to switch the first match after the sanction to their opponents, Mechelen, Racing Club promptly lost 6-1.

A local fourth division club, Eupen, then came to the rescue by offering their ground as a temporary measure and it is doubtful the club will ever return to Rocourt.

Supporters are certain to object to any merger with the city's third club Seraing. Should the amalgamation ever go ahead, the idea would be for the new club to share Standard's Stade Sclessin until the completion of a new stadium.

Racing Club's hopes of a revival following a 2-0 win against high-flying Lierse were dealt a blow by a subsequent 4-1 reverse at Charleroi, who themselves have been anxiously looking over their shoulders at the teams below them.

Charleroi's humiliating 4-0 home defeat by Saint-Trond was followed by a dressing room rebellion. The players were invited by club president Jean-Paul Spaute to voice their individual criticisms of trainer Georges Leekens.

● EENDRACHT AALST striker Gilles De Bilde has won the Golden Boot trophy as Belgium's Player of the Year. Belgian international De Bilde polled 203 votes. Runner-up was Franky Van Der Elst with 148.

NICHOLAS HARLING

Boot boy . . . Gilles De Bilde won Belgium's Golden Boot

Republic of Ireland

England again for Charlton

JACK CHARLTON celebrates nine years in charge of the Republic of Ireland with a prestigious friendly against England at Lansdowne Road on February 15.

Charlton, who was appointed manager in February 1986, has lost only 13 of his 85 games.

In four games against the country with whom he won a World Cup medal he has drawn three and won one. Those four encounters were all competitive games and certainly no classics.

Maybe both countries will be able to relax a little in this friendly under the new Lansdowne floodlights.

The FAI have received 90,000 applications for tickets for the game and over half will be disappointed. "England need only send over the jerseys to fill the ground," was the reaction of an FAI official.

Bishopstown is the surprise choice for the European Championship Under-21 game against England on March 28.

The Cork City ground has been unplayable several times this season and everybody admits that there is a drainage problem. Obviously the FAI are hoping for a dry spell at the end of March.

Ashley Ward of Norwich is the latest player seeking Irish roots. If successful, 24-year-old Manchester-born striker Ward could get an early call-up.

Cork City, despite the departure of manager Damien Richardson, continue to set the pace at the top of the Premier Division.

He quit after a row with chairman Pat O'Donovan, and Noel O'Mahony, who led Cork to the title in 1992 is back as caretaker until the end of the season.

Reigning champions Shamrock Rovers will not hand over the trophy easily. They are missing ace scorer Stephen Geoghegan, who moved to Shelbourne during the summer, but are still my tip for the title.

SEAN CREEDON

Rooting about . . . Ashley Ward is the latest English-born player to seek an Irish cap

Portugal

FC Porto push for the top

AT THE time of writing, FC Porto lead the Portuguese League on 32 points from Sporting Lisbon (31) and Benfica (28).

The end is still far away, but I believe Porto will manage to keep the distance.

Coach Bobby Robson has made a new team virtually from nothing. Kostadinov is no longer there. The Argentinians acquired early in the season demonstrated little talent.

So how did Robson succeed not only in reorganising but in showing much of the best football we have seen in Portugal during the season?

Simple. He knew what he wanted. Rui Barros returned to the club from Monaco, and the man they now call the heart of the whole team, Emerson, also arrived.

The Brazilian had played for Belenenses, and for some reason, after having a foot in at Benfica, did not end up in Lisbon.

The Russians discarded by Benfica, Kulkov and Yuran, also came to help re-invigorate the team.

Now, they are playing with increasing confidence and really believe that the championship and the Cup-winners Cup are within their grasp. Robson must be the happiest Englishman in Portugal.

Officials at Benfica are nowhere near as pleased, although the club have a lot to look forward to.

A court ordered the seizure and sale of the headquarters building, in lieu of unpaid debts. The club appealed and the matter has now gone to the High Court for settlement.

On the field, Joao Pinto is gradually getting back to his best. The same can be said of Claudio Caniggia, while Isaias has returned to the team. Benfica are in the Champions Cup and the next game against Milan is captivating imaginations in Lisbon.

The Eagles, heart and soul, will be going for it.

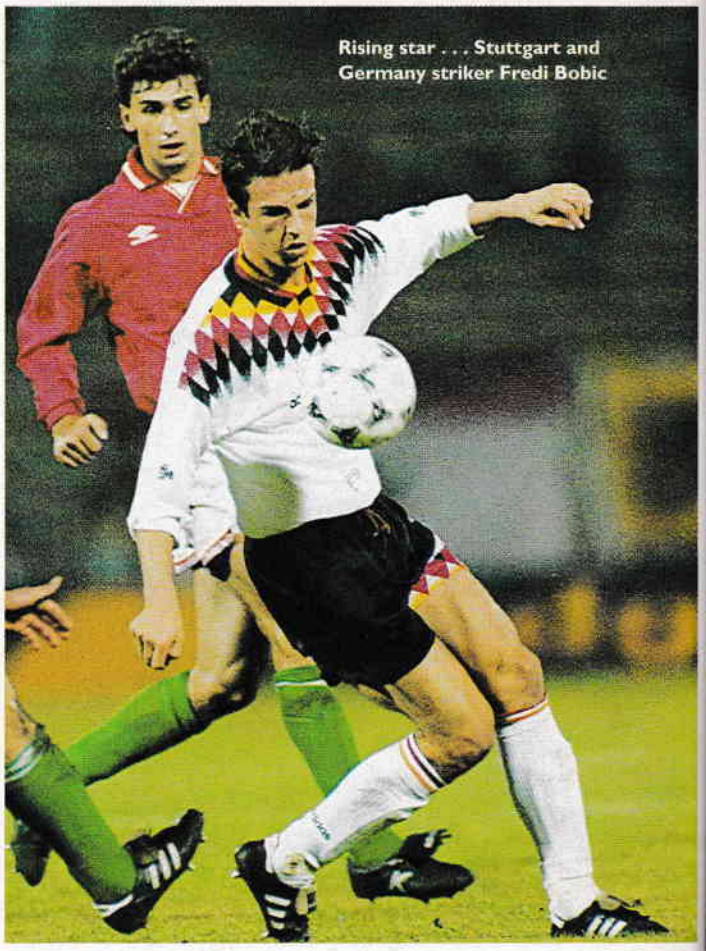
ALBERTO DA SILVA

Boy from Brazil . . . Emerson is leading FC Porto's title challenge

Germany

Fredi the dreamer

Nick Bidwell profiles Fredi Bobic, the young striker taking the Bundesliga by storm in his debut season



Rising star . . . Stuttgart and Germany striker Fredi Bobic

GERMANY and VfB Stuttgart scoring sensation Fredi Bobic is a young man in a hurry.

Only seven weeks after his Bundesliga debut, Bobic won his first full cap for the national team, in the 0-0 friendly with Hungary last October, and already many admirers are hailing him as the great new attacking hope of German football.

Quite a meteoric rise for a player who was far from assured of a first-team spot following his 1994 close-season move from Second Division Stuttgarter Kickers to city rivals VfB Stuttgart.

Bobic, on the bench for the opening league fixture of 94-95 at home to Hamburg, did not have to wait long to make his mark. He went on in the second half to glance in a Gerhard Poschner cross for a last-minute winner. What a way to celebrate a debut!

Since that rainy night last August, Bobic has not looked back. Four goals in his club's next four league matches underlined his exceptional finishing ability and prompted media claims that the 'New Klinsmann' had been discovered.

Comparisons are inevitable. Both have worn the colours of Stuttgart's two professional outfits, VfB and Kickers, and both share the priceless gift of all natural scorers, the knack of being in the right place at the right time when chances arise.

Of course, Bobic still has a long way to go to emulate the considerable successes of Klinsmann, but according to one knowledgeable observer, he definitely has what it takes.

"You would never guess Fredi was new to the Bundesliga," says Kaiserslautern coach Friedel Rausch. "He appears so confident and looks as though he's been playing for years.

"Klinsmann, Kuntz, Riedle and Kirsten are all excellent, but Bobic has made so much progress recently that he's breathing down their necks for a place in the national team.

"He has all the qualities a striker needs. He's quick and brave, heads the ball well, and is very cool in front of goal. He's been one of this season's revelations."

German manager Berti Vogts agrees. Although Bobic had appeared in only a handful of First Division games, Vogts had no qualms about picking him, and he went within a whisker of an international debut goal when Hungarian keeper Zsolt Petry finger-tipped his header over the bar.

"I find it hard to believe how my career has taken off in such a short period," says Bobic. "Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would play for Germany so soon after starting out in the Bundesliga.

"The match in Hungary was the proudest moment of my life. I felt goose bumps when the national anthem was played before the game, and it was a great experience to be in the same team as stars like Matthaus, Klinsmann and Hassler."

Cynics might argue that Bobic owed his international breakthrough to the 10 withdrawals from the squad to travel to Hungary, and can point out that since then Vogts has opted for a front-line partnership of Klinsmann and Kirsten.

Yet time is on Bobic's side. After all, he is only 23, while all the other competitors for a place in Germany's attack are close to or have turned 30, and their national team days must be numbered.

The not-too-distant future could well belong to exciting young prospects like Bobic and Borussia Monchengladbach's Heiko Herrlich.

As his surname suggests, Bobic's roots are to be found in the former Yugoslavia. He was born in Maribor on October 30, 1970, to a Slovenian mother and Croatian father. Shortly afterwards his family moved to the Stuttgart region, but it was only in 1992 that he finally obtained German citizenship.

He had begun his football career at the age of seven with a season at the VfR Bad Canstatt club, and then spent six years playing for VfB Stugttgart's schoolboy sides before moving across town in 1986 to join Stuttgarter Kickers, helping them win the 1990 German Youth Cup.

There followed a loan spell with a minor league team, TSF Ditzengen, and after scoring regularly in the Baden-Wurttemberg regional championship he headed back to Kickers in 1992.

Over the next couple of years, Bobic's 26 goals in 62 Second Division matches earned him a reputation as one of the most promising young strikers in the country, and last summer VfB general manager Dieter Hoeness acted smartly to persuade him to sign.

The coach, Jurgen Rober, stresses that Bobic still has much to learn, and says: "We musn't fall into the trap of expecting too much.

"He has only just arrived in the Bundesliga and inevitably will have his lean spells. But his long-term future is very bright. He has an instinctive talent for scoring and, provided he keeps working at his game, there is no limit to what he can achieve."

Drugs ban for Wohlfarth

FORMER international striker Roland Wohlfarth has been banned by the DFB with immediate effect for taking drugs.

The 31-year-old VfL Bochum player tested positive for a stimulant at an indoor tournament in Leipzig.

Wohlfarth, who recently returned to Germany from French side St Etienne, admitted taking the appetite suppressant Recatol but said he was unaware the medication contained the banned stimulant Norephedrine.

"The news has hit us like a bomb," Bochum coach Klaus Toppmoller said. "It was stupid of him. He should have got some information fom the doctor about the drug."

Wohlfarth faces a ban of at least four weeks, but it is unclear how harshly the DFB will punish the player as there are no precedant cases to refer to.

The DFB recently increased its drug-testing programme and is carrying out random tests at indoor tournemants for the first time.

In the October 1994 issue of *WORLD SOCCER*, we reported how no Bundesliga player had tested positive since mandatory random controls were introduced in 1988.

- INJURY-HIT Bayern Munich have confirmed the signings of Stuttgart's Thomas Strunz and Austrian international Andreas Herzog from Werder Bremen for next season.
- LOTHAR MATTHAUS faces an uncertain future after rupturing his achilles tendon in an indoor tounament. The injury is likely to put the 33-year-old Bayern Munich captain out of action at least until the end of the season.
- KAISERSLAUTERN'S Swedish international defender Jan Eriksson has been loaned to J.League side Urawa Red Diamonds for one year.

Dope ban . . . Wohlfarth faces a lengthy lay-off for taking drugs

Bayern gates still booming

THE BUNDESLIGA has been suspended for the winter break until February 17, but that does not mean clubs have shut up shop, or that players are kicking their heels.

Nearly all pros were back on duty in the first week in January, to take part in the 14 immensely popular indoor tournaments.

Most outfits organised training camps and friendlies, usually in warmer climes. Bayern Munich, for example, travelled to Japan, Kaiserslautern to China.

The first half of the season brought a continued rise in attendances, with the average up to 30,261. Last year at the corresponding stage the figure was 25,677. The most popular club, Bayern, had 53,778 per match, against 47,062 last year.

But there was a disquietening increase in sendings off, 44 altogether, including 26 two-tone red/yellows. Last year there were 38 (18 red/yellows) at 'half-time'.

The total of goals scored was

Great white hope . . . Matthias Sammer

roughly the same, 461 (3.01 per game) against 466 and 39 penalties were converted.

The top scorer, Freiburg's Argentinian Rudolfo Cardoso, was successful with all his seven spot-kicks in his total of 13 goals.

Bayern and Eintracht Frankfurt were the busiest clubs in the transfer market. For any player to be eligible to appear for a new club he has to be registered by January 9, otherwise he must wait to July 1. This put some clubs under pressure.

Frankfurt, determined to dispose of their three 'rebels', sent Maurizio Gaudino to Manchester City on loan to the end of the season, but Ghanaian Anthony Yeboah was involved in a far trickier deal.

He had set his heart on joining Bayern, who pulled out of negotiations because he was not eligible to play in the Champions League, having already played for Eintracht in the UEFA Cup this season.

So Yeboah, last year's Bundesliga's top marksman but now way down the list with seven goals, reluctantly signed for Leeds United in a complicated deal which is neither loan nor permanent transfer.

Bayern took Bulgarian striker Emil Kostadinov on loan from Deportivo La Coruna, though he is still registered with FC Porto and is not cup-tied.

On the other hand, Bayern lost Brazilian international defender Jorginho, who has left for Japan, and expensive goalkeeper Oliver Kahn has damaged ligaments and is out of action to the end of the season.

The national team's record in 1994 looks highly respectable – 11 wins, two draws and only two defeats. But the 2-0 loss at home against the Republic of Ireland was humiliating, and the 2-1 failure versus Bulgaria in the World Cup was devastating.

Captain Lothar Matthaus says "We could have won the World Cup".

And well they might, if it had not been for inexplicable lapses of concentration from even the biggest stars.

The current bouts of criticism stem from lack of consistency. Almost every successful display is followed by disappointment. Coach Berti Vogts promised "a rebuilding and rejuvenation process" but has had to shelve the plans because the newcomers also failed to keep their form.

The only exceptions were Matthaus, who rarely has a bad game, and the prolific Jurgen Klinsmann. He scored 11 goals, eight more than the three next best marksmen.

Apart from these two, only keeper Andreas Kopke, midfielder Matthias Sammer and stopper Thomas Helmer fulfilled expectations. Sammer is regarded as the great hope for 1995, either as schemer or successor to Matthaus as libero.

The Germans began the European Championship qualifying programme with three wins and seem sure to reach the finals. But not many fans would argue with FIFA's latest merit table, which places the squad only fifth in the world.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Japanese boy . . Jorginho has left Bayern for Japan

Austria

More class coming in

WITH attendances up by 49 per cent as compared with the corresponding stage last year, the Austrian League is unexpectedly booming.

More money from television and sponsorship has raised hopes that better players can be attracted to the National League.

Some top clubs are even trying to bring back redoubtable striker Toni Polster from Germany. Polster is reportedly unhappy at Koln because the club suggested he should live in neighbouring Belgium, to save £80,000 in income tax.

Polster insists: "I must live close to my friends and fans, and that means in Cologne."

FK Austria's officials are perturbed about the behaviour and lack of communication between their manager, German Egon Coordes, and the media. Coordes upset over what he claims is "unjustifiable" criticism, walked out of a recent TV interview.

The media describe Coordes as arrogant, but FK Austria are topping the table and directors continue to back him.

He has converted a bunch of soft technical artists into hard-working fighters, and says: "We are stronger because we run faster and win the ball more often than the opposition."

Rumours concerning Salzburg's Croatian coach, Otto Baric, intensified during the winter pause.

He travelled to Istanbul, where he apparently negotiated with Fenerbahce to take over as successor to the German, Holger Osieck, but he was beaten to the job by another Croatian, Tomislav Ivic.

Baric's contract has until summer to run, and Salzburg's board want to keep their most successful coach ever, at all costs.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Home boy . . . Toni Polster could be going back to Austria

Switzerland

Hodgson's heroes

THE SWISS national team under Englishman Roy Hodgson are going through the most successful year in their history.

Never before have the Swiss played so many matches and achieved so many victories in a year as they did in 1994.

Nine wins, three draws and only three defeats, with a goal tally of 26-14, is the proud record. The previous best can be traced way back to 1924 – 10 games, seven wins.

The Swiss FA, celebrating 100 years of existence in 1995, could not have wished for a better early present. In the past some team managers took five or six years to record nine wins.

English coach Roy Hodgson rejects the carping that his charges were often successful against weak opposition in friendlies. In 17 competitive fixtures he has achieved 10 wins and four draws.

Hodgson has perhaps found better conditions than some of his predecessors. Not only are bonuses relatively much higher, but the time allocated to preparation and training camps has been extended. Last year the squad spent 85 days together training, travelling and playing matches.

Now, after three wins in three matches, the Swiss are on course to participate in their first European Championship finals.

Yet the League structure in Switzerland is still under fire. Basically the Swiss have to organise two separate championship phases, with different formulas – 22 games in the qualifying period, then another 14 in the play-off pool.

Meanwhile the sales of the best players abroad persist unabated. Striker Oliver Neuville (Servette) and midfielder Pascal Thuler (Grasshopper) are on their way to Germany, and others seem set to follow.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Holland

Celtic go Dutch

SCOTTISH giants Celtic have finally made a *BIG* signing – 6ft 5in Dutch striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk, who moved from NAC Breda in a £1.5million deal.

Dutch international Van Hooijdonk, 25, has scored 114 goals in 182 games in Holland, and recently made his international debut against Luxembourg in a 5-1 European Championship victory against Luxembourg.

Celtic manager Tommy Burns is convinced Van Hooijdonk will be a valuable part of his new-look Celtic. "I'm delighted to sign a player of Pierre's undoubted ability," he said. "His record of 25 goals in 31 matches in the Dutch First Division last season speaks for itself.

"My colleagues and I have been searching the market for quality players, in Britain and across Europe. He's a proven goalscorer of considerable ability and will excite the Celtic support.

"Pierre has not been brought here as the saviour of this club though. We still want two or three more players in the next few months. I'd like more firepower because it is goals that win games.

"But Pierre will give us more options up front because he's aggresive and he can get on the end of crosses."

Van Hooijdonk seems equally pleased with the move, saying: "Celtic and their tradition of exciting, attacking football are well-known in Holland and throughout the world.

"I'm very excited and honoured to have the opportunity to play a part in the renaissance of this great club.

"I'm hoping that playing for a club like Celtic will help me win more caps because it took me a long time to break into the squad. But most important of all is to do well for Celtic.

"I'm very impressed by Celtic – it's one of the biggest clubs in Europe."

Pierre Van Hooijdonk was born on November 29, 1969 in Steenbergen, a small town in the Brabant region of south-central Holland. As a schoolboy he signed with his local Steenbergen side, and then went on to local professional side NAC Breda.

He failed to make an impact at modest NAC, and returned to Steenbergen. But in 1989 he got a second chance with RBC Rosendahl, a small First-Division club 15 kilometres away from Breda, where he made his First-Division debut at the age of 19.

He spent two successful seasons at RBC, scoring 27 goals in 37 games in the 1990-91 season, and was soon attracting NAC's attention once more. They re-signed him, and he immediately responded with 20 goals in his first full season. In the 1992-93 season Van Hooijdonk scored 26 goals in 33 games as NAC won promotion to Holland's Premier Division.

Sceptics doubted whether Van Hooijdonk could repeat the trick in the top flight, but he answered with 25 goals in 35 games. Along with fellow-striker John Lammers and club captain Ton Lokhoff, he formed NAC's attacking "golden triangle" – which brought the trio 51 goals last season – as NAC finished seventh, way above expectation for a club whose ground only holds 12,000 people.

Such performances attracted a wider audience, and last December he made his international debut as a replacement for the injured Dennis Bergkamp. For little NAC, it was a cause for celebration: their first capped player in over a decade. Sadly, after just one game, he left for Scotland.

NAC fans are sad to see such a quality player leave the club, but many feel Van Hooijdonk got out at just the right time. The pressure on NAC to repeat – or even better – last season's performance is just too much, and the club are currently hovering just above the relegation zone.

Van Hooijdonk took just 12 minutes of his debut against Hearts to announce his arrival in Scottish football, scoring a stunning goal in a 1-1 draw. More than that, though, Van Hooijdonk showed he is more than just a big target man. He has a skilful touch rare in such tall players, and it is this which attracts Burns.

"We are still in transition but we're geting there slowly but surely," Burns said after the draw with Hearts. "I was delighted for Pierre to score a goal of that quality on his debut.

"He showed he's more than just a big man who you can hit balls to. He has a special talent for doing the unexpected and the goal was a top-quality strike.

"I thought he had lost his opportunity but he beat two defenders and lashed it away. I was delighted with that and so were the supporters."

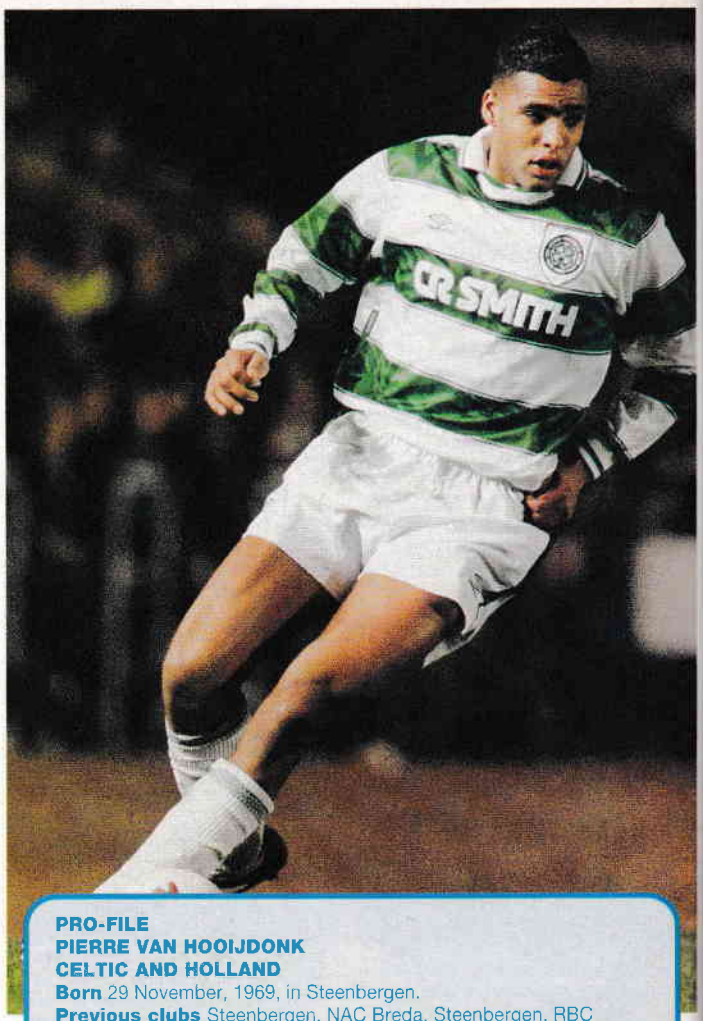
A delighted Van Hooijdonk said: "It's always a dream to score a goal like that on your debut for a club like Celtic. It was one of my most spectacular goals ever and it's great to play for these supporters. I would hope Celtic will start to win games and I will score more goals."

Van Hooijdonk also is aware of the pressure on him in a Celtic side that has lacked goals all season. Indeed, the Glasgow club have not scored more than two in any competitive game this season. Van Hooijdonk said: "I felt a bit of pressure beforehand. The side has not scored more than two so people will be looking to me. It was great to score on my debut and the fans were great to me.

"It was very fast, much faster than Holland. For the last 20 minutes my lungs were empty."

There was more good news for Van Hooijdonk the day after his Celtic debut, when he was named in the Dutch national squad to face France in a friendly in Utrecht. With a new start in Scotland and a burgeoning internationalcareer, things are certainly on the up for Celtic's Mr Big.

JOHN KELLY



PRO-FILE
PIERRE VAN HOOIJDONK
CELTIC AND HOLLAND
Born 29 November, 1969, in Steenbergen.
Previous clubs Steenbergen, NAC Breda, Steenbergen, RBC Rosendahl, NAC Breda.
International debut 14 December, 1994, European Championship qualifier v Luxembourg in Rotterdam (won 5-1).
International caps 1 (no goals).
HONOURS
Division One play-off winners 1993.

Feyenoord eye Brazilian, age ten!

IT WAS suggested earlier in the season that Feyenoord didn't have the money to play the usual transfer market game when things were not going well.

The money they collected from Wolves for John de Wolf did help. But it's more likely that the club has other plans to strengthen their chances of European football next season as well as build for the future.

On this front Brazil is their main target. In fact Feyenoord are keeping their eyes on a young Brazilian schoolboy reported to be only 10! It seems they are taking a leaf out of Ajax's book, bringing youngsters to Holland and training them in football as well as providing a school teacher.

Meanwhile, Feyenoord have snapped up two 21-year-old defenders: Bernard Schuiteman from Bayer Leverkusen and Dennis Kliouev from Dynamo Moscow.

Over at Sparta, neighbours of Feyenoord in Rotterdam, chief coach Han Berger is leaving after two seasons in charge.

Moving the other way on the coaching front is Scotland's Jimmy Calderwood. Currently assistant coach to Second Division Cambuur, next season he'll be assistant coach with Willem II in the First Division.

On the playing front, Arthur Numan has accepted a contract that will keep him at PSV until 1998. The left-sided midfielder has established himself in the Dutch international squad. Sheer coincidence, of course, that PSV's new chief coach is Dick Advocaat, the ex-Holland boss.

Meanwhile, Guus Hiddink, the new boss of the Dutch national team, suffered a 1-0 home defeat to France in his international match. Although only a friendly, Hiddink learned a lot from it.

Two new young strikers, Glenn Helder, of Vitesse, and Michael Mols, of FC Twente, both brought up in the Ajax school, made their debuts. Hiddink plans to broaden his squad to around 26 players, and although Mols was substituted in the second half, both did enough to convince Hiddink he is on the right track.

ERIC NICHOLLS

Greece

Fans stay away

HARD to believe by looking at the 60,000 empty seats, but Panathinaikos are having a great season.

They were still unbeaten after 16 matches, with a nine-point lead over second-placed OFI Crete, but drew only 9,853 paying customers to the Olympic Stadium to see them defeated 2-0.

Panathinaikos have the best offensive (45 goals) and defensive (nine goals) record in the league, and Krzysztof Warzycha has a 10-goal advantage in the scoring race, with 19 goals.

OFI are faring even worse at the gate, and sold only 3,220 tickets for the 2-1 defeat of PAOK Salonica.

Three other matches that day brought in fewer than 1,000 fans, and officials certainly have to be concerned. The lowest of the day was Levadialos-Doxa – only 500 tickets were sold.

In general, poor play, an increase in televised matches, rain, snow and an increased interest in basketball are taking their toll on soccer attendances.

Dusan Bajevic, the Bosnian Serb coach who has led AEK to three First Division championships, has been declared a Greek citizen. He is interested in coaching the national team some time in the future.

Top gun . . . leading scorer Krzysztof Warzycha

Watch for the name . . . Nikos Trivyzadakis. He is 15, and travels 120km from southern Crete each day so he can train with the OFI reserves. He is a top student at high school, as well.

LOU ECONOMPOLOULOS

Albania

Tirana eye up title

FK TIRANA have their sights set on a 15th league title. They lead the table on 26 points with rivals Partizani on 21.

Albpetrol of Patosi, the surprise of the season, have 17 points and champions Teuta 16.

Indrit Fortuzi of FK Tirana is top scorer with 10 goals, but FK's best player has been 23-year-old midfielder Ardian Merna, whose father Ali played for the national team in the 1960s.

International goalkeeper Perlat Musta, 38, is back in action with Partizani after four years abroad with Dinamo Bucharest.

Panajor Pano has been voted the best Albanian player of all time by newspaper Sporti. Pano played for Partizani (1959-1974) and was captain of the national team.

Current Albanian captain Sulejman Demollari, who collected a record 40th cap in the 2-1 defeat by Germany in Kaiserslautern, has left Dinamo Bucharest to join Panathinaikos in Athens.

GEZIM NUSH

Captain's example . . . Albanian skipper Demollari in his record 40th international

Malta

Floriana smash transfer record

FLORIANA have signed 24-year-old international Joe Brincat from Hamrun Spartans in a record deal worth around £117,000. The deal also took Floriana's Mark Marlow and Carmel Formosa to Hamrun.

High-flying Hibernians seem yet again to have the edge over the other title contenders. They hit poor St George's for seven to finish as winter champions on 23 points from 9 games played so far – 5 points ahead of closest rivals Sliema.

The national side lost 1-0 to a stronger Norwegian team in their third Euro '96 Group 5 qualifier at Ta' Qali, a game which marked the return of Hibernians central defender Michael Woods after an absence of nine years.

DOMENCIO AQUILINA

Cyprus

REFEREES from Israel and the Czech Republic were called in to replace striking Cypriot refs protesting at hooligan violence which left four officials in hospital over one weekend.

"There is systematic violence on the fields and we get no protection," said Chistos Skapoullis, a spokesman for Cyprus's 200 referees.

He alleged that hooligans often invade pitches at the end of matches to attack referees and throw drink cans at officials during games.

Cyprus FA President, Marios Lefkaritis said the Federation had taken measures to protect the foreign referess from both their angry Cypriot colleagues and the soccer hooligans. "We are going to use referees from abroad for as long as we have to. We are very, very tired of the monopoly enjoyed by Cypriot referees."

LAZAROS HAJICONSTANDIS

Israel

FOR the first time this season, the top placings have a familiar ring, with the two local powerhouses, Maccabi Tel Aviv and Maccabi Haifa, heading the division.

Until now the leadership had been fiercely contested by a number of less fashionable clubs, but now the Big Two have reasserted themselves. After 15 matches ,Tel Aviv have a two-point advantage over champions Maccabi Haifa.

DEREK FATTAL

Liechtenstein

LIECHTENSTEIN reached the halfway point in their European Championship programme with no points and only one goal from their five games.

They have done well to restrict their goals against to 21, eight of which came in the latest defeat at the hands of Portugal.

TIM BRICE

Luxembourg

GATES improved by 15 per cent in the first half of the Luxembourg season, but this has done little for the morale of the national team.

The latest defeat, 5-0 by Holland, emphasised the gulf and reinforced claims by such soccer giants as Franz Beckenbauer that nations like Luxembourg should be confined to groups of similar low status when entering international competition, instead of suffering continual morale-sapping defeats.

Promoting some of the Under-21 side to the full squad might help. Carlos Weiss, now 37, and Roby Langers, 35, are surely no longer worth their places.

League play resumes this month after the winter break, with Grevenmecher at the top, two points clear of Jeunesse d'Esch.

Avenir Beggen, seeking a third successive title, are one point further back.

TIM BRICE

Turkey

FENERBAHCE'S new President Ali Sen certainly made his presence felt on resuming the position he previously held in 1983.

For his first game back in charge, when the season resumed after the winter break. Sen let spectators in free – 28,000 of them – and gave them a flag and a free drink as well.

The mood of good humour was increased when the team, under new coach Tomislav Ivic, beat a Second Division club, Eskisehirspor, 4-0 in the first leg of the Turkish Cup quarter-finals.

Sen, nothing if not confident, claims that the eight-point difference between his team and the League leaders will soon be made up.

Fenerbahce duly won their first league match after the restart, 3-0 at home to relegation-threatened Zeytinburnu, while leaders Galatasaray were losing 3-1 away to Genclerbirligi.

But Besiktas also won, 2-0 at home to Denizlispor, to take over at the top on 42 points. Which is eight more than Fenerbahce.

Bursaspor, who knocked Besiktas out of the Cup earlier in the season, drew the home leg of their quarter-final against Champions Galatasaray, who needed a last-minute penalty to avoid defeat.

Trabzonspor won 7-0 in their home leg against Gaziantep, and Samsunspor beat Kocaeli 2-0.

MEHMET DEMIRCAN

Maspalomas tournament

IFK not breezy enough

Keir Radnedge reports from the Maspalomas international tournament in Gran Canaria

MASPALOMAS in early January is precisely what you would expect of a resort on Gran Canaria. White and bright and windy. And the temperature drops sharply with the sun over the western horizon of the Atlantic.

Yet this is the offbeat setting for a winter break tournament which has been running happily now for a more than decade and which will be maintained as long as the promotional value survives. Which promises to be for quite some time.

Dutch League leaders Roda Kerkrade opened the tournament with an entertaining and conclusive 4-2 victory over a Brondby side lacking virtually all their first-teamers. Seven were with Denmark's seniors at the Intercontinental Cup in Saudi Arabia while another four were away with the Danes' Under-21s.

The next night, Champions Cup quarter-finalists IFK Gothenburg squeezed out a 1-0 win over a slightly unlucky Sturm Graz with a late Mikael Martinsson penalty. IFK looked rusty and sluggish in the first half but picked up a little pace – but not much cohesion – after the interval. New starlet Erik Washlstedt was anonymous and Jesper Blomqvist was absent through injury.

The third-place match was far more entertaining, withSturm – coached by ex-Yugoslavia boss Ivica Osim – 4-2 winners thanks to a hat-trick from Mario Haas. Brondby's youngsters, who took an early lead through Kenneth Fuhr, had more of the game and could have punished more severely Sturm keeper Roland Goriupp's inability to fly-kick even the most gentle of back passes.

In the end, Brondby's wholehearted attacking effort was punished by Sturm's pace on the counter-attack. All of the three goals Haas scored were tap-ins after breaks from halfway.

IFK stepped up the pace for the final but not enough to cope with Roda, who looked much sharper, with good reason. Thomas Ravelli, rested from the semi-final, started this time but had little chance with Roda's two, decisive, second-half goals. The first was a fierce, curling free-kick from the left foot of Max Huiberts, the second a close-range stab from Maurice Graef after Magnus Johansson had been caught half asleep by Barry Van Galen.

IFK's Stefan Rehn collected the Player of the Tournament trophy and – surprisingly – Sturm's Goriupp took the Goalkeeping Award.

IFK's consolation was that they were spared concern over how to transport home with them the enormous trophy in the image of the Maspalomas lighthouse. Four men were needed to carry it out to Roda's team bus.

Maspalomas moments . . . Roda celebrate victory over IFK (top); Stefan Rehn (right) was Player of the Tournament

Denmark

Piontek set to return

SEPP PIONTEK has agreed to return to Danish football next summer as coach of ambitious Superliga club Aab Aalborg.

Highly-respected German Piontek, World Soccer's Manager of the year in 1983 for his work inspiring the Danish revolution, has kept a home in Denmark despite working in Turkey, most recently with Bursaspor.

He will replace Poul Erik Andreasen, who seems likely to be the new boss of champions Silkeborg when his contract expires in June.

Aab are well placed to challenge for the title when the second half of the season begins in the Spring, but Silkeborg have had a torrid time.

They flirted with relegation under new Swedish coach Bo Nilsson, who found it difficult to win over the players. He was pilloried for spending more time talking into a dictaphone than shouting instructions to the team on the pitch, and was sacked in January.

The short-term replacement, former striker Frank Petersen, will need to be hugely impressive to keep the job.

Denmark's national coach, Richard Moller Nielsen also was having problems despite the fine victory in the Intercontinental tournament in Saudi Arabia.

He called it Danish soccer's finest hour, but the critics still stayed on his back. Moller Nielsen accused some of the media of wanting Denmark to lose, and relations are heavily strained.

Defeating Argentina in the final was a memorable performance, but nothing will supplant the 1992 European Championships triumph in the eyes of Danish fans.

There was further heartening news from the Superliga squad touring Canada, who beat the host nation 1-0 in the first game of the trip.

Brondby's highly impressive striker, Bo Hansen, scored of the Danish League XI, who are playing without any of the UEFA Cup heroes from OB Odense. They have a separate tour of Brazil to prepare for the quarter-final games against Parma.

Former OB striker Lars Elstrup created the biggest headlines of the winter, but hardly for footballing reasons.

Elstrup, one of the heroes of 1992, but now given up the game after a knee injury, and joined a religious sect called Wild Goose. His decision to drop out of normal life was revealed in a TV documentary.

The news stunned the country, and Elstrup was then dragged into English soccer's inquiry into allegations of illegal payments. An accusation was made that £200,000 went missing during his transfer from OB to Luton.

JIM HOLDEN

Finland

Ikalainen's job

JUKKA IKALAINEN has been confirmed as the new national coach on a one-year contract.

At 37, Ikalainen will be one of the youngest national bosses in Europe. He is the former captain of the Finnish team and was capped 56 times. He has never coached in the Finnish Premier League.

Under the new coach Finland comfortably beat the Faroe Islands and San Marino at home. Bolton's Mixu Paatelainen grabbed six goals in these matches – including all four against San Marino, bringing his total for Finland to 12. However, he will be suspended from the return match in San Marino.

- FC JAZZ have hired Pertti Lundell from TPV Tampere as their new coach. TPV will be coached next season by Jari-Pekka Keurulainen, previously with HJK Helsinki.
- HJK have sold Finnish international midfielder Rami Rantanen to Sweden's Trelleborgs and their Russian midfielder Vasily Karatayev has gone to TPV.

PENTTI HIETANEN

Sweden

Gothenburg sign international duo

CHAMPIONS IFK Gothenburg have completed the signings of striker Mats Lilienberg, from 1860 Munich, and midfielder Stefan Landberg, from Osters, both former full caps.

Such is the strength-in-depth at the club at the moment that defender Teddy Lucic, who plays for Vastra Frolunda and was a member of Sweden's World Cup squad, refused to join IFK, fearing that he would not get a game.

- NIKLAS KINDVALL, top scorer last season with 23, has joined Germany's Hamburg from IFK Norrkoping for £450,000. Kindvall, 27, did not get into Sweden's World Cup squad. He previously had trials in Greece with Olympiakos.
- JORGEN PETTERSSON, Sweden's hottest young striker, has decided to remain at Malmo, after turning down a £1million-plus move to Ajax Amsterdam. Malmo are watching Greger Andrijevski, who scored nine goals for relegated Landskrona.

PENTTI HIETANEN

Bulgaria

Penev pulled two ways

NATIONAL COACH Dimitar Penev is in a tricky position despite the successful World Cup campaign and promising position in Euro '96 Group 7.

Penev also holds the office of Director of Sport at CSKA Sofia, and there are voices saying he should not wear both hats.

There have been suggestions that his position as 'team chief' has enabled CSKA to attract players who might not otherwise have considered moving there.

Penev's contract with the Bulgarian Football Union ran out at the end of last year but he recently signed a two-year extension.

CKSA will still have ground to make up in the League on the resumption, by which time cross town-rivals Slavia should have a new chief.

President Valentine Molov has resigned because of lack of help from the government, who fail to match sponsors' contributions to sport in general and soccer in particular.

Slavia's Brazilian defender, Ruggerio Pereira, ended up in hospital after a fracas at a garage where he was having his car repaired.

Before the first game of the second half of the season, on February 25, Slavia were making history by being the first Bulgarian club to tour South Africa, where two games were planned.

BOB VAUGHAN

Carry on coach . . . Dimitar Penev is staying on as national boss

Hungary

Kozma in at Kispest

KISPEST-HONVED will resume their quest to regain the championship at Vac, the defending titleholders, on March 4 with another new manager – their fifth permanent appointment since 1990-91.

Mihaly Kozma, leading scorer during his time as a player, was appointed on an 18-month contract to replace Dimitri Davidovic, who resigned while on a mid-winter break in Belgium.

Kozma, who had been managing director, is replaced by Imre Komora, now 55 and the club's most successful trainer (three successive championship titles 1983-86).

Intriguingly, the back-to-basics reshuffle for home-grown patriots after two successive foreigners resulted in Louis de Vries, the club's Belgian majority shareholder, announcing increased commitment at a time when many thought he would take a step backwards from the club, or even attempt to sell his shares and withdraw from the operation.

He said: "I have talked with my partners and we are staying. If possible, we will give more help in order to make the club function better."

Now it will be de Vries, not Kispest administrators, who may feel isolated with language difficulties with a manager who does not speak fluent English. But the team will surely be more integrated, committed and clear-headed.

The national team, for the first time since 1973, failed to win a single international in 1994, drawing four and losing the other eight, the last 5-1 in Mexico's Azteca stadium.

Kalman Meszoly had only four matches in charge since taking over from Jozsef Verebes.

Altogether, 51 players were used in the 12 matches, the most in the last seven seasons, and 10 newcomers were called up. Is it any wonder why it is difficult to see a collection of great players being found when managers have to cast their net so wide?

Istvan Kozma was the only player to appear throughout all four of Meszoly's matches.

The investigation into the case involving Bekescsaba and Stadler – the match between them on September 9 was allegedly rigged – will continue with the police taking the case to court in Bekescsaba. After the decision the matter will then be passed on to the sports authority for consideration.

BRIAN O'SULLIVAN

Romania

Gheorghe the first in annual poll

NOT unexpectedly, Gheorghe Hagi was voted 1994 Romanian Footballer of the Year.

In the poll of coaches, club presidents, journalists and national newspaper readers, Florin Raducioiu was placed second and Ionut Lupescu third. Gica Popescu of Spurs came fourth and his former colleague at White Hart Lane, Ilie Dumitrescu, fifth.

Dinamo Bucharest's chairman, Vasile Anghel, and trainer, Ion Moldovan, have resigned following the team's poor league and European performances.

The FC National club prseident, Cornel Dinu, was named as a likely replacement for Anghel and Remus Vlad, coach of Second Division Corvinul Hunedoara, has been tipped to take over from Moldovan.

BOB VAUGHAN

Czech Republic

DUSAN UHRIN spent the winter break wrestling with the national team's problems and preparing for the next Euro '96 qualifier again Belarus at home.

He will again be under pressure to win well what is generally seen as an easy fixture. But so was Malta away until the team came home with just one point.

In 1994 Uhrin used 27 players, rather a high number, which was increased by some unexpected 'unavailabilities.' It has to be hoped Uhrin has sorted these things out over the holidays and that a better and smaller mix may do the trick in 1995.

Last year only one match was lost – a friendly with Switzerland –, but the ones which were not – the draws in Rotterdam and La Valetta – and might well have been could cost the Czech Republic dear when their Euro '96 campaign closes in mid November with a home tie with Luxembourg.

BOB VAUGHAN

Slovakia

CHAMPIONS Slovan have lost one of their internationals. After nine years Jaroslav Timko has taken an offer from the tiny Czech First Division club, Drnovice, almost certainly for financial reasons.

He joins Slovak compatriot Ondrej Danko, and both will be under pressure to help the Moravian village side avoid relegation.

Stanislas Moravec, who began at Inter Bratislava, is going in the other direction, from French club Martigues to Trnava, who are experiencing something of a revival under former Slovan and Under-21 coach Karol Pecze.

Trnava will be hoping to make it to a UEFA Cup place, but even if they do not Pecze will have done a good job. He showed in the autumn 'round' that it is possible to be successful and play some football.

BOB VAUGHAN

Poland

THE finish to the 1992/93 season is still being discussed. Two years ago, Legia Warsaw beat Wisla Krakow 6-0 and topped the table on goal difference from LKS Lodz, who defeated Olimpia Poznan 7-1.

The Polish FA found the clubs guilty of rigging the results and all four had three points deducted from next season's total. Lech Poznan, who finished third, were then awarded the title.

And now Piotr Voig, former sponsor of Wisla, claims his team "sold" the game to Legia.

"I am sure it was like that! Not just this one but the Wisla's game against Siarka Tarnobrzeg as well. By accident I was a witness of conversation between two players about match-fixing. But I can not prove it!"

The Polish responded with caution to Voigt's claims. "Piotr Voigt did not tell us any facts or names. So we have no ground to punish anybody," said the PFA's Michal Listkiewicz. We await further developments.

Sokol Pniewy's Polish international Tomasz Rzasa, 21, has joined Swiss club Grasshopper of Zurich for £140,000, in preferemce to French league leaders Nantes.

For the first time an indoor soccer tournament has been held in Poland. It attracted a crowd of 7,000 spectators in Katowice, more than an average league match. Gornik Zabrze were winners; Tomasz Wieszczycki was top scorer with five goals for LKS Lodz.

DARIUSZ KUROWSKI

Split personal

Keir Radnedge profiles one of the surprise packages to emerge from this season's Champions League

HAJDUK SPLIT have come through the sort of challenges which have nothing to do with sport to take their proud place in the quarter-finals of this season's Champions Cup.

First, for two years they had no proper domestic competition in which to play because of the armed strife in their country following the collapse of the former Yugoslavia.

Secondly, the secession of Croatia meant that a new national football authority had to be constructed in double-quick time to claim a place in the corridors of power at UEFA. Lacking that, no Croat team could have gained entry to European competition.

And European competition, with its financial rewards and implicit establishment patronage, is of incalculable value to Croatian football both on and off the pitch.

The start of 1991 was the beginning of the end of the old era. Several leading Zagreb clubs pulled out of the league championship of the former Yugoslavia and the rest, Hajduk included, followed their lead. Little wonder that, when Hajduk did take to the field, they fell to Tottenham in the first round of the Cup-winners Cup in 1991-92.

Now, at last, they are back. They face Ajax Amsterdam in a Champions Cup quarter-final over two legs in March and are fast regaining the reputation previous club favourites earned as hard but skilful and attractive opposition. It was that sort of football which took them to the semi-finals of the UEFA Cup in 1984 – when Hajduk lost on the away goals rule to Tottenham. Hajduk won 2-1 at home but lost 1-0 in London.

Hajduk also reached the semi-finals of the Cup-winners Cup before losing 0-0 and 1-0 to Don Revie's Leeds in 1973. But they have never yet, in 19 seasons in Europe, reached a Final. Their prospects were dimmed, even before the Yugoslav break-up, after hooliganism at a Cup-winners Cup tie against Marseille in the autumn of 1988 cost Hajduk a three-season ban.

Hajduk won the old Yugoslav championship nine times and the cup on 10 occasions and their history is littered with some of the most famous names in Yugoslav football – such as internationally-renowned coach Tomislav Ivic (now with Fenerbahce in Turkey) and players, who included goalkeeper Vladimir Beara, inside forward Bernard Vukas, defender Ivan Buljan, midfielder Ivan Gudelj, the Vujovic twins Zoran and Zlatko as well as schemer Ivica Surjak. In recent years the club has exported such talents as Alen Boksic and Robert Jarni.

Falling down . . . Hajduk's Asanovic takes a tumble against Benfica

In 1924 Hajduk provided all 11 players for the national team against Czechoslovakia in Zagreb. Three years later they entered a new international club competition called the Mitropa Cup – forerunner of today's European cups. In 1930 Hajduk provided the backbone of the Yugoslav side who reached the semi-finals of the inaugural World Cup in Uruguay.

That Hajduk are rich in tradition should be no surprise. This is the oldest club in Croatia, founded in 1911. According to legend, a group of students, who had brought a football home with them from their studies in Prague, burst into the office of their college principal in Split to ask his permission to set up a club.

That was no problem. But what name could they use? Their tutor said: "Since you forced your way into my office like bandits, you might as well call yourselves that."

Or, as Ajax will call them, Hajduk!

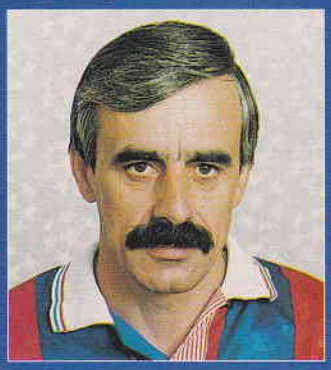
Feeding time . . . liquid refreshment for Hajduk keeper Tonci Gabric

ties

HAJDUK SPLIT
Founded February 13 1911
Address
Stadion Poljud
58 000 Split
Tel 058 45555/41755
Stadium Poljud
(51,700 capacity, 26,700 seats)
Colours White shirts, blue shorts, blue socks
President Nadan Vidosevic
Coach Ivan Katalinic
Honours Yugoslav championship 1927, 1929, 1950, 1952, 1955, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1979. Croatian championship 1992, 1994. Yugoslav Cup 1967, 1972, 1974-77, 1984, 1987, 1991. Croatian Cup 1993
European best Champions Cup quarter-finalists 1995; European Cup-winners Cup semi-finalists 1973; UEFA Cup semi-finalists 1984

The squad

THE COACH
Ivan KATALINIC. Aged 44.
Played over 300 matches for Hajduk during the club's glory days of the 1970s and was capped more than 20 times by the former Yugoslavia. Has been the Hajduk head coach since 1992, during which time he has led the club to domestic cup and league success.



THE PLAYERS
Tonci GABRIC
Goalkeeper. Aged 33
(born March 16, 1961).
First on the books of Hajduk as a 20-year-old but spent five seasons with Rijeka before spells at Cibalia Vinkovic and PAOK Salonika in Greece. Rejoined Hajduk in July last year. Over 400 career league appearances.

Zoran SLAVICA
Goalkeeper. Aged 27
(born March 28, 1967).
Joined Hajduk from Sibenik three years ago, and has now made over 50 appearances for he club. Made his debut for Croatia against Mexico in Zagreb in October 1992.

Darko BUTROROVIC
Defender. Aged 24
(born August 12, 1970).
Right-back. Made 31 appearances for Hajduk last season.

Josip SPANJIC
Aged 28 (born March 2, 1966).
Experienced central defender with over 100 appearances for Hajduk. Spent a year in Malaysia and then two seasons with Klagenfurt in Austria.

Sasha PERSON *(below)*
Defender. Aged 29
(born February 28, 1965).
Began his career with Rijeka, playing over 200 matches for the club before leaving for Hajduk in 1992.

Zoran VULIC
Defender. Aged 33
(born October 4, 1961).
Plays a pivotal role at the heart of Hajduk's defence. One of the major personalities of Croatian football, Zoran was a junior, youth, Olympic and full international for the former Yugoslavia. He made over 300 appearances for Hajduk, before heading for Real Mallorca in Spain in 1988. Three successful seasons, he crossed the Pyrenees and enjoyed another three very productive seasons as a senior member of Claude Suaudeau's young Nantes side. He rejoined Hajduk last summer, and has become an important member of the Croatian national side. Important at free-kicks around the penalty area.

Tonci MARTIC
Defender. Aged 22
(born November 23, 1972).
A promising young defender who signed his first professional contract with the club last July.

Damir VUICA
Defender. Aged 23
(born January 17, 1972).
Signed last year from NK Osijek.

Robert VLADISLAVIC
Defender. Aged 26
(born August 12, 1968).
Right-back or central defender. Over 100 appearances for Hajduk.

Karol PRAZENICA
Defender. Aged 24
(born November 15, 1970).
The only non-Croatian in the current squad. Prazenica, who was born in Prague and represented the former Czechoslavkia, is now registered as a Slovakian. A left-sided defender who has been at the club since 1993.

Mirsad HIBIC
Defender. Aged 21
(born October 11, 1973).
Young central defender who has represented Croatia at Under-21 level. Signed from Zenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993.

Igor STIMAC
Defender. Aged 27
(born November 6, 1967).
A member of Yugoslavia's 1987 World Youth Championship-winning side now back with Hajduk after a brief spell with Cadiz in Spain.

Stjepan ANDRIJASEVIC
Midfield. Aged 28
(born February 7, 1967).
Youth, Olympic and Under-21 international for the former Yugoslavia and capped by Croatia at full level. Spent six months of the 1992-1993 season on loan to Monaco, before spending the most of last season on loan to Spanish Cup Finalists Celta.

Aliosha ASANOVIC
Midfield. Aged 29
(born September 14, 1965).
Creative playmaker with vision and goalscoring ability. A youth, Olympic and full international for Yugoslavia, who has been capped by Croatia. After 200 matches with Hajduk, he played for Metz, Cannes and Montpellier in France. Returned to Hajduk in July 1994.

Milan RAPAJIC
Midfield. Aged 21
(born August 13, 1973).
A skilful left-sided player rated by many as one of the most talented in Croatian football. Capped by Croatia at both Under-21 and full levels.

Mario MESTROVIC
Midfield. Aged 24
(born May 22, 1970).
A promising player who joined Hajduk at the start of July 1994.

Goran VUCEVIC
Midfield. Aged 23
(born May 28, 1971).
A valuable acquisition who has returned home on loan for one year after a spell in Spain with Barcelona. A skilful, goalscoring midfielder, he played for Hajduk in the 1987/88 campaign, and then spent a year on loan to FC Split before returning to play for Hajduk until 1992. Barcelona signed him in July 1992 but had few first team chances and was forced to miss nearly all of the 1993/94 campaign after suffering a cruciate ligament injury. Full international for Croatia.

Stipe BALAJIC
Midfield. Aged 26
(born September 27, 1968).

Dejan RACUNICA
Midfield. Aged 25
(born December 5, 1969).
An attacking midfielder who joined Hajduk in 1993 from Sibenik. Scored three minutes into his international debut for Croatia v Mexico in October 1992.

Nenad PRALIJA
Midfield. Aged 24
(born December 11, 1970).
Utility player who joined Hajduk from local Second Division club, FC Split, in 1993.

Hari VUKAS
Attack. Aged 22
(born October 6, 1972).
Returned to the club last year after a season on loan to FC Primorac.

Ivica MORNAR *(below)*
Attack. Aged 21
(born January 12, 1974).
Rated as the most promising striker in Croatia. Represented Croatia at Olympic and Under-21 levels before winning his first full cap.

Second best

Who's on the way up in Europe? WORLD SOCCER's European correspondents report on the current state of play in the continent's lower divisions

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA's impoverished Second Division clubs lead mostly a hand-to-mouth existence, fighting off bailiffs while begging for support among the fickle fans not interested in second-class football played mainly in primitive grounds with inadequate facilities and minimum comfort.

Only one club is promoted automatically to Division One: the second-ranked team in Division Two contests home-and-away play-offs against the second-from-bottom First Division club to decide the other place.

Of the clubs formerly in the First Division, the current leaders Grazer AK and second-placed St Polten, demoted last season, seem to have the best chance of returning next term.

BELGIUM

BELGIUM'S promotion system is organised in the so-called 'period championship' format. The second division – currently experimenting with the kick-in – has been expanded this season from 16 to 18 teams.

They play a 'regular' league season, but, for administrative reasons, this is split into three: matches 1-10, matches 11-20 and matches 21-30. The winners of these three 'periods', if they do not finish in the single, top promotion place at the season's end, take part in a four-team play-off for the second promotion place.

The system is supposed to spread significance and excitement through the season, but one club will know, as early as October, that their place in the play-offs is assured.

Beerschot were first period winners, while Waregem won the second period.

BULGARIA

OLD First League campaigners Dunav look like returning to the top flight.

They were three points ahead of Rakovski, who will be challenged hard for the Northern Section play-off place by Spartak, one of the two Varna clubs relegated last term.

Three clubs go up: the two regional division champions and the winners of a play-off tie between the second-placed clubs in North and South.

Levski Kiustendil's 11-point lead in the Southern Section should ensure direct ascent in the summer but it could be a close call for the play-off spot – five points separate seven clubs.

DENMARK

ONE OF Denmark's most famous clubs, Hvidovre, just failed to win entry to the vital new qualification league after a heartbreak finish to the season last October.

Despite beating Horsens 3-0 away on the last day, rivals B93 pipped them for the last spot and joined nine other clubs who will compete in the spring for four places in a new 12-team Superliga to be created next year. The winners of the First Division season were Viborg, who were relegated from the top flight only last year.

ENGLAND

ITS ALL a bit confusing really. England's Second Division is officially titled The Endsleigh Insurance Football League First Division, and the winners still receive the old Football League Championship trophy. But it is definitely a Second Division, with the FA Carling Premiership the top-flight division in English football.

This season, to reduce the top division to 20 sides, only the champions are guaranteed automatic promotion from the 24-team First Division. The next four highest-placed teams play-off for the remaining promotion place.

This season, several 'traditional' clubs are battling it out with some surprise packages for those two FA Premiership places. Cup-specialists Bolton Wanderers, who have claimed the scalps of seven Premier League teams in cup ties in recent seasons, currently lead the way, closely followed by Middlesbrough, now managed by Bryan Robson, and Graham Taylor's big-spending Wolves.

Tranmere Rovers, unfairly dubbed the third club on Merseyside, currently occupy one of the play-off places, along with Reading, who only won promotion to the division last season. Challenging to get into the play-offs are Sheffield United, Barnsley, Derby County, Grimsby Town, Oldham and Watford.

At the other end of the table Notts County, now under the managership of Howard Kendall, are bottom, with Bristol City, Burnley and Port Vale also in the relegation frame.

FRANCE

BY THE time Gueugnon play at home to Red Star in what could be the last key match of the Second Division season, it may become clear that the true turning point came on the resumption of hostilities (*le mot juste!*) which followed the winter break.

Then it was that Nancy, who had approached that break in impressive form, with 26 points out of their last dozen matches, went to Marseille and dared to win, 2-0. A hundred home fans tried to rush on the field, battling with the police. George Ramos, the referee, could sarcely be blamed for getting the players off the pitch as soon as possible.

Marseille were thought already to have problems, partly because so many of their men, including the impressively prolific Tony Cascarino, are over 30. Partly because even if they do gain promotion in what's now a unitary, 22-club, three-go-up, three points per win League, the French Federation could order them to stay down for corruption. Or even go down a division.

Marseille should never be down where they are; a disciplinary measure, in fact. So all the more credit to unfashionable Guingamp and Gueugnon for setting such a pace. Gueugnon could have gone up in 1979 but turned down the chance. They flagged a bit before the break, but since then their acclaimed manager, Roland Gransart, has worked on the defence. Which is the great strength of rivals Guingamp, plus the opportunism of Stephane Guivarg'h.

GERMANY

GERMANY'S Second Division underwent several structural changes before settling down to a format of 18 clubs.

Last year five clubs were sent down: this year three will be promoted but four relegated, to the amateur ranks in newly-created regional leagues.

This is the biggest trauma of every Second Division outfit – to lose professional status, with all contracts declared null and void, and a bleak future. The 2. Bundesliga also is handicapped by less TV and sponsorship money, and its lowly image.

In the first half of this season only five matches attracted more than 20,000 spectators. The biggest crowd was 23,500 to watch Nurnberg against Chemnitzer FC. But in 61 games the attendances varied between 1,000 and 5,000.

The biggest problems face amateur clubs promoted to this professional division for the first time and needing major readjustments.

Nonetheless, top coaches are being recruited, as at Waldhof Mannheim (Uli Stielike) and Wattenscheid (Hans-Peter Briegel).

VfB Leipzig began the season with Englishman Tony Woodcock, but he was fired before the first half ended in December with the club second from bottom.

VfL Wolfsburg topped the 2. Bundesliga at the break, two points ahead of St Pauli and Fortuna Dusseldorf.

GREECE

THERE are 18 teams in the Greek Second Division; the top three teams each season advance to the First.

Hooliganism is much more of a problem in the lower divisions than in the First and a weekend does not pass without scenes of violence at many minor matches. Foreign coaches are barred from the Second and Third Divisions, but not foreign players.

Paniliakos are the current second division leaders, closely followed by Kalamata and Panahaiki.

HOLLAND

BARRING accidents, Fortuna Sittard, and chief coach Pim Verbeek, will have completed a happy double this season. Back to the Dutch top flight and back as champions – they had a five-point lead with 18 matches played.

The second division in Holland is organised with a 'period championship' system along the same lines as Belgium.

Folkert Velten heads the scoring list with 16. Velten plays for Heracles, who play most of their games on Saturdays as Velten will not play on a Sunday for religious reasons.

HUNGARY

MTK, managed by Bertalan Bicskei, are in fine form in the East section of the Hungarian Second Division, and outright favourites to take the single automatic promotion spot.

Two of the four promotion places will be decided by play-offs, each of the second-placed teams opposing either the 14th or 15th team in the First Division over two-legs.

BKV Elore, the team of the Budapest autobus transport company, head the West section, with 30 points. Siofok and Szazhalombatta, who have 28, watch closely.

The experiment of having kick-ins, rather than throw-ins, has had a mixed reception. The general tactic has been to use the kick-in as the start of another short-passing move.

ISRAEL

MACCABI JAFFA are the runaway leaders in Israel's Second Division.

With 15 matches played, Jaffa have an authoritive nine-point lead over their nearest rivals, Hapoel Ashdod and Hakoah Ramat Gan. They have a 100 per cent home record and have only lost once all season.

Ness Ziona and Hapoel Kiryat Gat look set to contest the second promotion spot with Ashdod and Ramat Gan

Held in reserve . . . Barcelona's Igor Korneyev

Red Robbo . . . Middlesbrough's player-manager Bryan Robson

Promotion hunter . . . Marseille's Tony Cascarino

ITALY

SERIE B, the Italian Second Division, comprises 20 teams, with four winning promotion to Serie A and another four being relegated to Serie C, a huge grouping which contains the equivalent of England's Divisions Three and Four.

There tends to be a certain familiarity about the Serie B championship in that it is usually dominated by sides with recent Serie A experience.

The current division leaders, Piacenza and Udinese, were relegated from Serie A only last season, while the third side Ancona had played in Serie A in the 1992-'93 season.

There is a small and select group of 'provincial' Italian clubs – Ascoli, Atalanta, Bari, Brescia, Cesena, Como, Lecce, Pescara, Udinese and Verona, to name the most obvious – who seem to spend their sporting lives caught in an eternal Yo-Yo between Serie A and B, regularily winning promotion to the big lights, only to just as regularily go back down to Serie B again, after one or two first division seasons.

MALTA

MELLIEHA lead Malta's First Division with 20 points from nine games, and finished 1994 as winter champions. Only one point separates the leaders from St Patrick, who led the table for most of the first round, until Mellieha beat them 2-1.

Of the rest, Rabat Ajax, are well placed to bounce back to the Premier scene, as are near neighbours Dingli Swallows.

NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND is unique in European football in being the only country which has not had a system of promotion and relegation. Accession to the top division has been by invitation only.

Over the past two and a half decades only five new clubs – Larne, Carrick Rangers, Newry Town, Omagh Town and Ballyclare Comrades – have been added to the League roster.

Presently leading the 'B' Division are Dungannon Swifts, closely followed by Loughgall, last season's champions Dundela and Banbridge Town.

NORWAY

THE 1994 season gave clubs in Norway's two First Division sections an increased chance of winning promotion to the new enlarged 14-club elite division, with winners and runners-up from both sections winning promotion.

Strindheim and Hodd finished champions of their respective sections, with Stabekk and Molde runners-up. Stabekk are the only club without any experience of the top flight.

POLAND

SLASK WROCLAW lead Group One of Poland's second division, with 26 points, ahead of Amica Wronki on goal difference. They beat Amica 3-1 in the last round game in Wroclaw. It was the first defeat of the season for Wronki, who were promoted last year.

In Group Two, Siarka Tarnobrzeg lead second-placed GKS Belchatow by two points.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

DERRY CITY have stayed in the FAI Premier Division since winning promotion from the First Division, but all of the other clubs who have been promoted have gone back down at some stage. Monaghan, promoted in 1993, look to be heading back down this season.

As usual, the First Division title race is tight. Drogheda United are favourites and University College Dublin are also looking good for a return to the top flight.

The race for third place and a chance to play-off with a Premier Division side looks like being between Finn Harps from Donegal, Dublin amateurs Home Farm, Longford Town from the midlands and Waterford United from the south.

RUSSIA

ERZU GROZNY beat Second Division leaders Chernomorets 2-1 but had to withdraw from the championship later because of the crisis in Chechnya. The widely-fancied Grozny team joined Avtodor, Torpedo Vladimir, Zvezda and Tekhinvest in being relegated to the lower division.

In spite of the loss Chernomorets retained their lead and were promoted with runners-up Rostselmash. They replaced Dinamo Stavropol and Lada Togliatti in the top division for the 1995 season.

SCOTLAND

THE reconstruction of the Scottish League with a 10-team Premier League and three 10-team divisions, has generated a renewed level of competition for those clubs outside the high echelons of the game.

In the new First Division a number of clubs are battling for the solitary promotion place, and for the coveted second top spot which will ensure a sudden death play-off against a Premier Division side at the end of the season.

No fewer than four clubs, Dundee, Dunfermline, Airdrie and Raith Rovers, are locked in battle for the honours but others such as St Johnstone, Hamilton and Clydebank retain hopes of being involved.

SLOVAKIA

LEVICE lead Slovakia's Second Division, narrowly, from relegated Nitra, who not so long ago were entertaining Koln in the UEFA Cup.

Nitra probably are the better bet for promotion, with greater power up front and more resources off the field.

Like all the Slovak professional clubs they badly need sponsorship, especially as Division Two is a national league. Teams have to travel the length of the country, from the outskirts of Bratislava almost to the Ukraine, for just one promotion place.

SPAIN

SPANIARDS refer to the Second Division as 'el pozo' – the well. It's easy to fall in but damned difficult to climb out.

Below Division Two proper, the four regional groups of Division 2B are a compendium of hard-luck stories, especially in the Andalusian group where former First Division glories such as Cadiz, Huelva, Cordoba and Almeria rake through the ashes in search of a phoenix. Only four of the 80 clubs involved can gain promotion to Division 2 proper.

Yet any attempts to streamline and re-launch the second division run immediately into major political obstacles, notably the presence of the big clubs' reserve teams. Barcelona, Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao have second teams in Division 2 and 13 more lurk among the ranks of Division 2B.

They cannot, for obvious reasons, be promoted and relegation is a passing embarrassment. Results have only a relative importance and, richly nourished by the mother ship, they are impervious to the commercial worries experienced by the other teams in the division. More importantly, their exclusive aim is to serve the interests of the first team and this makes them a falsifying influence.

Barcelona B's Russian World Cup midfielder Igor Korneyev was recently promoted to the first team to replace Romario. With other quality players liable to yo-yo between the first team and the reserves, Barcelona become a wild card.

Rayo Vallecano look set for a swift return to the top flight in one of the two automatic spots. They currently head Division Two on goal difference from Lleida and Merida. Competition for the two play-off spots is likely to be fierce – six points separate the top 13 teams.

SWITZERLAND

THE peculiar championship formula in Switzerland also affects the Second Division. This season saw the formation of two separate lower divisions, Westgruppe and Ostgruppe.

Each comprised eight clubs who between July 30 and October 22 played each other home and away.

Kriens and Winterthur (East) and Yverdon and Solothurn (West) advanced and were joined by the last four from the top division, FC Zurich, Servette, St Gallen and Young Boys of Bern, to form the relegation/promotion pool, scheduled to start on February 26. The top four qualify for the 1995-96 First Division, and the other four go into the Second.

UKRAINE

TEAMS in Ukraine First League can be symbolically divided into two groups.

The clubs of the new wave, such as Zirka-Nibas and Borisphen, are backed by private, ambitious businessmen and are slowly edging out teams sponsored by the old state industrial enterprises like Metalist, Stal and Naftovyk.

Zirka-Nibas, where Andrei Kanchelskis started his career, topped the table after the first half of the championship. Borisphen, launched two years ago, are the hot favourites to join Zirka-Nibas in gaining promotion.

WALES

THE SECOND Division level in Wales is split into north and south.

The northern division, the Cymru Alliance, is currently led by Wrexham AFC's reserve side, who are ineligible for promotion as a reserve side. Second-placed Brymbo, along with Llandudno FC and Cemaes Bay are all in contention for a move up.

In the south, the second tier is formed by the Welsh Football League First Division, currently led by Briton Ferry Athletic – aiming for an immediate return to the Konica. They are 14 points ahead of Caldicot Town.

● *2nd division tables start on page 57*

The vision thing

Keir Radnedge reports on how European football turned on and tuned in to the television and satellite revolution

THE PHONE request appeared comparatively simple. A marketing agency wanted to find the name of the host broadcaster and original rights-holders for the European Champions Cup Finals of 1957, 1959 and 1961.

The request was made to the *WORLD SOCCER* office and we did our best to help, suggesting that – if the finals had appeared on television – then the state broadcasting system would have been responsible.

This did not satisfy the questioner. She simply could not understand that there was a time – and not so long ago, either – when sports events took place in their own right. Not because television and sponsors were tied into the equation.

It took a full 10 minutes to explain that the great sports events – the World Cup, the FA Cup, the Olympic Games, the Ashes – acquired their lustre and prestige as pace-setting competitive creations.

Our questioner eventually went off the line clearly baffled by such altruism. After all, we live and work and watch our sport in a world where events are routinely created purely for the financial power engendered by the event-television-sponsor triangle.

Golf and tennis are the best examples of 'factory' sports, manufacturing one event after another. But everyone else has jumped on the bandwagon – even rugby union, with its hypocritical veneer of amateurism, has launched its own world cup (wonder where they got the idea?). And football is the biggest earner of the lot.

Why? Simple. First, television channels know that football pulls audiences and ratings like very little else. Secondly, most high-street advertisers know that the core of the football audience is just the sociological group they want to reach. Thirdly, football is the most popularly hypnotic sport as far as the majority of the world's population is concerned.

Rugby, cricket, gridiron football, ice hockey and so on are popular in particular geographical pockets. But nothing casts the worldwide spell like football – which is why so many countries busily package their football into screen-bite highlights and sell them all around the world.

Never mind English, football is the universal language.

Football's importance in the television ratings has grown just as the number of television channels has exploded with the arrival of cable and satellite. The more channels there are, the harder they must fight for their audience share and the greater the demand for football to help achieve precisely that.

On the other side of the literal coin, football has found itself in a seller's market. Thus the price of rights has gone up and up until we reach a stage where FIFA took home millions for television rights to these last World Cup finals in the United States.

Not only that, but the guarantee of global coverage persuaded major worldwide corporations to expend around $20million apiece to advertise their wares and brand names around the pitches to, they hope, profitable subliminal effect.

On a local level, virtually every important football which moves now has a price on it.

The United Kingdom remains a comparative backwater compared with continental Europe as far as the range of available TV football is concerned. But everyone has their share of the pie. BBC1 and Sky with the Premiership; ITV with the UEFA Champions League and the Endsleigh League; Channel 4 with live Italian football.

Then there are the 'hidden' satellite stations. If you bought an Astra dish to watch Sky Sports you can also tune in to Eurosport (an assortment of international goodies which would probably gather more viewers if its programme publicity ever caught up with its scheduling). You may also tune in to the German sports station DSF, operating around the German domestic fringe but bringing live Spanish and Italian football (they show the Sunday night Italian match live). Then you can switch to Germany's ZDF and watch Berti Vogts being jeered all the way to Kaiserslautern and back again. And there will be more.

> **'Never mind English, football is the universal language'**

Each and every country 'sells' its football differently, because of the accidents of geography and tradition.

In England, the various organisations each sell their own products and then European club matches go singly, or by single club, to the highest bidder (generally ITV). In Germany, however, the rights income for European club matches goes into a central fund which is then shared out among both the competing clubs and the non-competing clubs. That is one reason why little fuss is made about switching matches forward to help clubs prepare for European ties – because even their domestic opponents stand to benefit financially from further German success.

Football is, of course, playing with fire. UEFA's great fear is that the television explosion will, if unchecked, see TV channels blasting live football across Europe's frontiers to the detriment of the continent's 'real' football attendances.

That is why UEFA long ago instituted the infamous Article 14 of its statutes which sets out to control TV football. Article 14, in essence, says that host federations have the ultimate say on whether a match can be transmitted . . . and federations are liable to heavy fines if they allow cross-border projection of a match against the wishes of federations of countries through which the signal is transmitted.

The TV companies have been fighting a steady battle in the European judicial system on the grounds that Article 14 infringes everything from freedom of information to freedom of labour. It is, they claim, unfair restriction on business enterprise in direct contravention of European Union legislation.

The TV companies also contend that match attendances have *not* been decimated by the advent of live, international, televised football. Indeed, they claim the opposite: that TV's promotional efforts on behalf of football have galvanised more participatory interest in the game.

UEFA, it must be said, has not been well served in the Article 14 war by some countries – Portugal was one regular culprit – which objected to match transmissions from, say, Italy or Spain, because two Portuguese third division matches were being staged the same evening.

It is in trying to bring the broadcasters onside that UEFA has gone down the Champions League road. The UEFA Cup, Champions Cup and Cup-winners Cup are staged now on separate nights for two reasons.

First, to raise the image of the Champions League and its attraction for sponsors and television, partly through trying to guarantee the season-long presence of clubs from major markets such as Germany, England and Italy; and, secondly, to spread out the other two competitions so that clubs there could maximise on television opportunities of their own.

So now we come full circle.

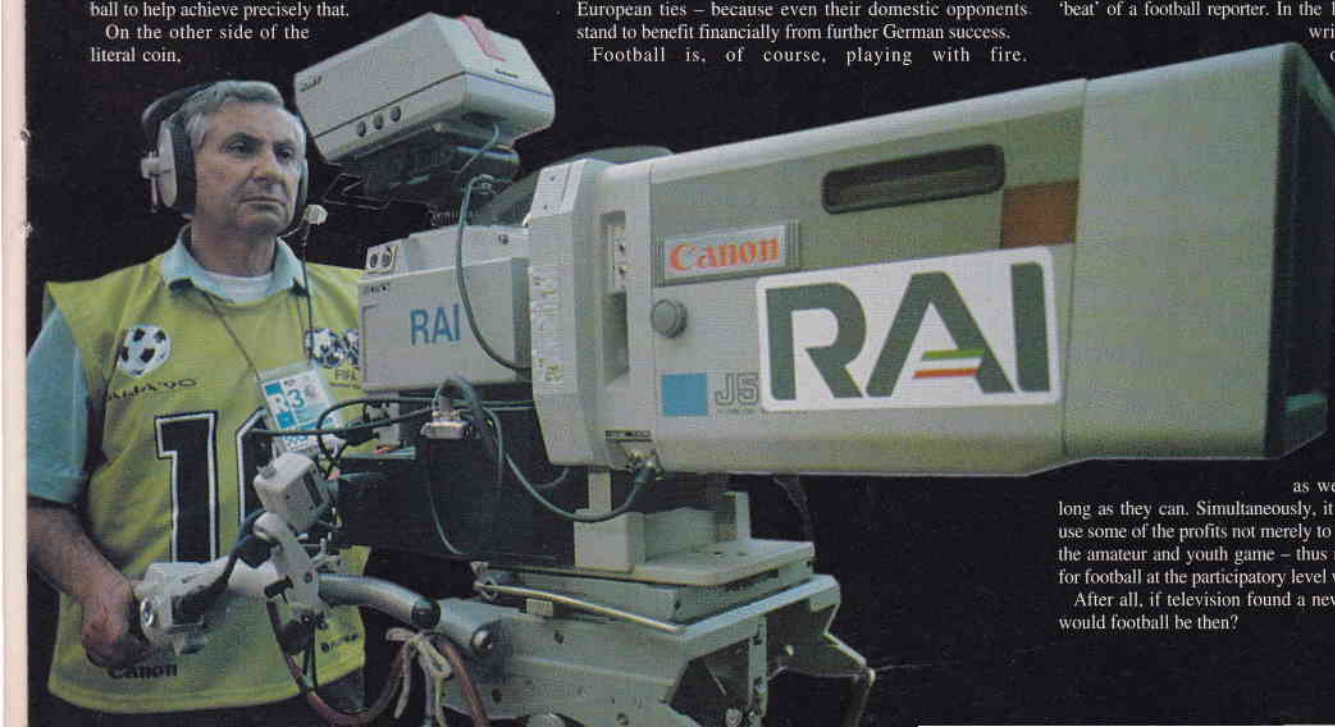
The Champions Cup was a great event all on its own before the TV revolution. Now it is entangled in the triangle which brings enormous financial rewards and from which there is no turning back.

When UEFA president Lennart Johansson said the Champions League was here to stay he was no doubt thinking of both the business and the sporting sides of the equation.

Professional football is no longer 'mere' sport. Look at the 'beat' of a football reporter. In the 1950s it was enough to write that a team kicked off with a rush and follow the match, ball by breathless ball, to the final whistle. Now what happens *off* the pitch often assumes greater importance than what happens *on* it. And football concerns are to be found in newspapers' business, political and sociology pages.

The challenge facing the game's governing bodies is to ride the television tiger as well as they can and as long as they can. Simultaneously, it is imperative that they use some of the profits not merely to maintain but to develop the amateur and youth game – thus maintaining enthusiasm for football at the participatory level where it still *is* a sport.

After all, if television found a new toy tomorrow, where would football be then?



Station to Station

AUSTRIA

STATE CHANNEL ORF pays the clubs a 'mere' £500,000 per year in total. Competition from neighbouring German, Czech, Hungarian and Italian TV prevents the Austrian federation demanding a higher fee. Separate financial arrangements are negotiated for European ties and internationals.

ENGLAND

FOR YEARS the BBC-ITV cartel depressed the price of football. Then came ITV's celebrated Snatch of the Day, in which the commercial channel negotiated an exclusive deal with the Football League. In fact, ITV was only foreshadowing a much more ruthless future in which BBC and Sky scooped their own exclusive contract with the Premier League. This was, on its agreement, reported to be worth £304million.

Sky shows a live match on a Sunday afternoon and a Monday night as well as all home England internationals. It shares the FA Cup with the BBC which also has its Saturday night Match of the Day highlights show (now 30 years old) plus highlights of England's international matches.

ITV has exclusive rights to the First Division and Champions League and generally dominates single-match or single-club bids for other European club ties.

FRANCE

THREE CHANNELS cover football. Subscriber channel Canal+ screens one league match live per week plus highlights, preview and news. National station France 2 has rights to the French Cup, including one live match. Private channel TF1 runs a league highlights show and has the rights to the League Cup, incuding one live game, plus the Champions League. Other European cup ties are open to negotiation.

The live league match is played on a Sunday afternoon when the regular matches are scheduled for Saturday. Canal+ go live on Friday night on the odd occasions when scheduled matches take place on a Sunday.

French clubs used to receive a flat £500,000 a year from TV for league rights but this was changed after a wrangle with Marseille. The situation regards interests and rights is further complicated by the fact that Canal+ effectively own Paris Saint-Germain.

GERMANY

SIX STATIONS broadcast football regularly. The satellite channel SAT1 has exclusive rights to transmit Bundesliga matches on Saturdays (in an early-evening, 90-minute highlights package) or live on Sunday. It also has Italian league rights.

Of the two state channels, ARD broadcasts regional league matches and some domestic cup ties while ZDF is restricted to cup ties. The state channels jointly hold rights to national team matches.

The other private channels broadcasting football are RTL (live Champions League), DSF (20 live second division matches per season plus Spanish and Italian live matches and the winter break indoor tournaments) and the pay-per-view Premiere (live weekly German 'top-match' until 1998). Each Bundesliga club receives £1.6million a year in TV income. In addition, extra income is generated from Sunday matches and European ties outside the Champions League.

Prices for TV football have risen dramatically from a decade ago when the ARD-ZDF cartel kept prices down.

HOLLAND

NOS, the state company, occasionally shows league football live on a Saturday or Sunday, but this can be as few as three or four times a season. NOS also transmits highlights and general news. Filmnet, a subscriber channel, transmits one live game per week.

ITALY

THE $120MILLION three-year contract between Italian state broadcasters, RAI, and the Italian FA, negotiated in 1993, guarantees RAI 'exclusive' coverage of the Italian club championship and of Italy's home internationals, plus the lion's share of Italian Cup and European competition games.

Keen to avoid a soccer price war, RAI sold the rights to Sunday night's live first division game (and a Saturday night second division tie) to Telepiu 2, a pay channel in which RAI's fiercest rivals, Silvio Berlusconi's Fininvest group, has a 10% holding, for $10million per season. RAI also 'released' all Champions League ties and a number of UEFA Cup, Cup-winners Cup and Italian Cup games to Fininvest.

The result of all this is a televisual feast for soccer fans. On Sundays, you can start at 1.30pm, before championship kick-off, and go right through to midnight without interruption. On a Sunday night, all three RAI channels, plus Fininvest's Italia 1 and Telemontecarlo do extensive review programmes, analysing all nine 1st division games, plus highlighting the major 2nd division action. All that is ongoing, too, while Telepiu 2 screen live first division action.

As well as midweek live action, fans are treated to a further 20 hours of reviews, previews and analysis, while Telepiu 2 and Telemontecarlo offer weekly round-up programmes.

All told, you could spend up to 50 hours in a busy week, watching only soccer on Italian television.

PORTUGAL

STATE CHANNEL RTP broadcasts league football live. Rights are negotiated with the clubs through a private company, Olivedesportos, in which the national coach Toni (Antonio Oliveira) is involved. The bigger clubs are paid higher fees but more and more of the smaller clubs are selling their matches, through direct negotiation, to private stations SIC and TVI.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

IRISH SOCCER fans are spoiled for choice. Apart from games on the state channel RTE, they can also tune into the BBC, Channel 4, Sky and Eurosport.

RTE show delayed transmissions of English Premier League games most Saturdays. Champions League ties and Republic international games are screened live.

Most League of Ireland clubs now play their games on Friday and Saturday nights to avoid the TV competition, with highlights shown by RTE on Sunday night.

SCOTLAND

SKY SPORTS has just joined the Scottish TV scene with a short-term league deal whose first 'product' was the switching of the traditional Old Firm (Celtic v Rangers) derby from its new year date to January 2, so it slotted into a vacant night on the crowded UK TV schedule. BBC has live rights to the Cup Final and League Cup Final plus highlights of one league game on a Saturday night in Sportscene.

The commercial channel STV has a deal for seven live league games per season plus a regular Sunday afternoon highlights package. The present all-in league package with the BBC and STV is worth £4.5million and runs for four seasons up until 1998. This compares with £750,000 in 1990-91.

SPAIN

DURING the 12 months between August 1, 1993 and July 31, 1994, Spanish TV channels screened 788 football matches, of which 512 were live. This season could break even that record.

Competition for rights is fierce, with all channels showing football at some time or another. That means TVE1 and TVE2 (state-run); Antena 3, Tele 5; the pay-channel Canal+, with almost one million subscribers. Then comes the network of regional channels subsidised by autonomous local governments.

TVE retains rights to all national team games (and, indeed, sponsors them) and also holds the rights for the Champions League. Games in other European competitions are negotiated piecemeal with Antena 3 the most successful bidder this season.

A typical weekend begins at 6pm on Saturday with regional transmissions of second division games. Then, at 9pm, comes the live game pulled out of the Sunday programme by TVE or the regional channels. On Sundays one match is played late, starting at 7.30pm, and screened live by Canal+, which also shows an English game live on Saturday and an Italian game live on Sunday, as well as some German football. There is also a raft of highlights programmes.

The overall fee paid for league football is £26million per season, which is divided up through a system of flat fees for clubs involved in live games plus a bonus depending on league points at the season's end.

How times have changed. Ten years ago TVE held a monopoly and paid £3.5million for one weekly live game, internationals, a Sunday night highlights programme and the Cup Final.

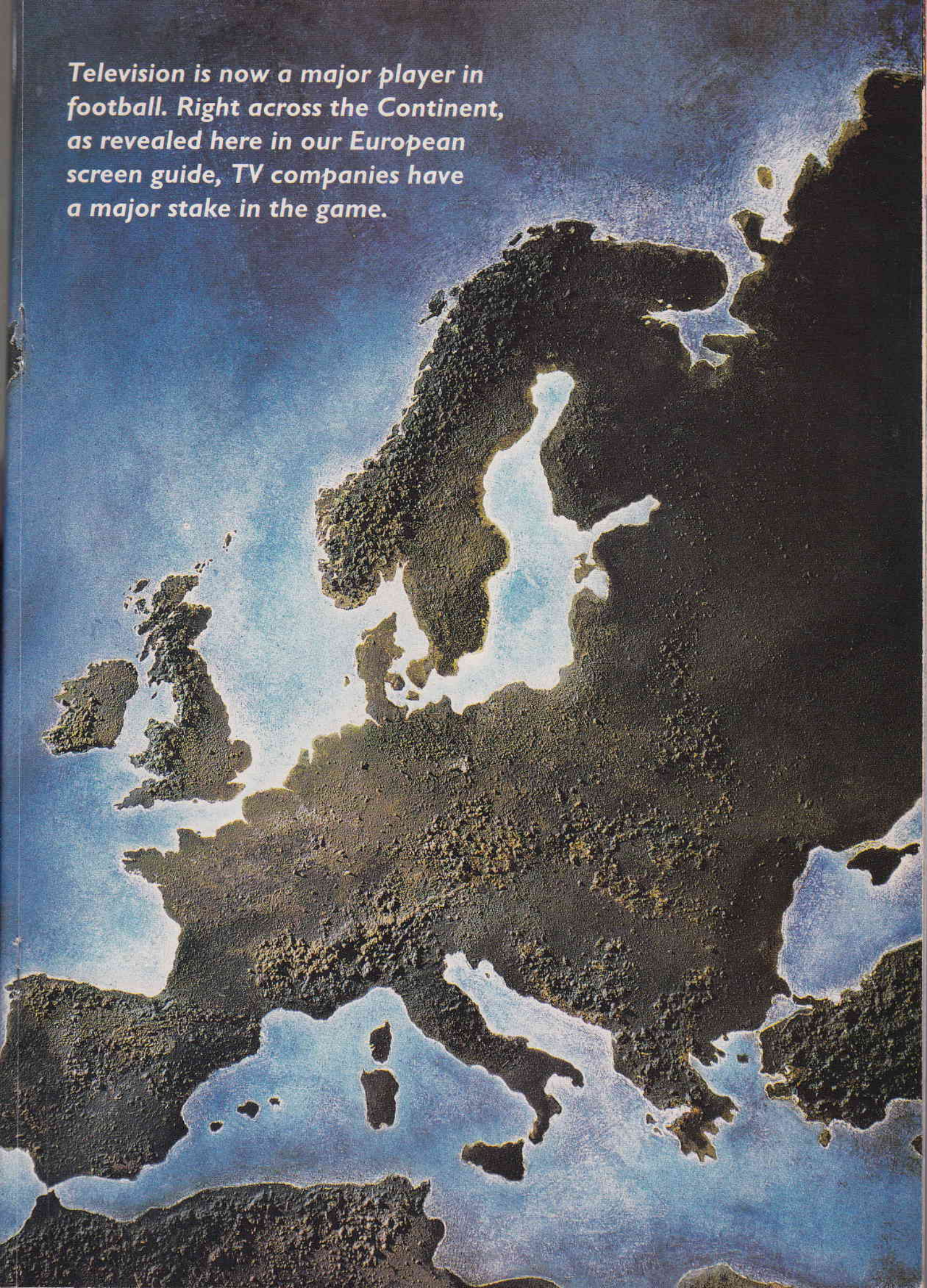
SWITZERLAND

STATE CHANNEL DRS has paid a record £5.5million for future broadcasting rights covering league matches, all internationals, the Champions League and other European ties with Swiss participation.

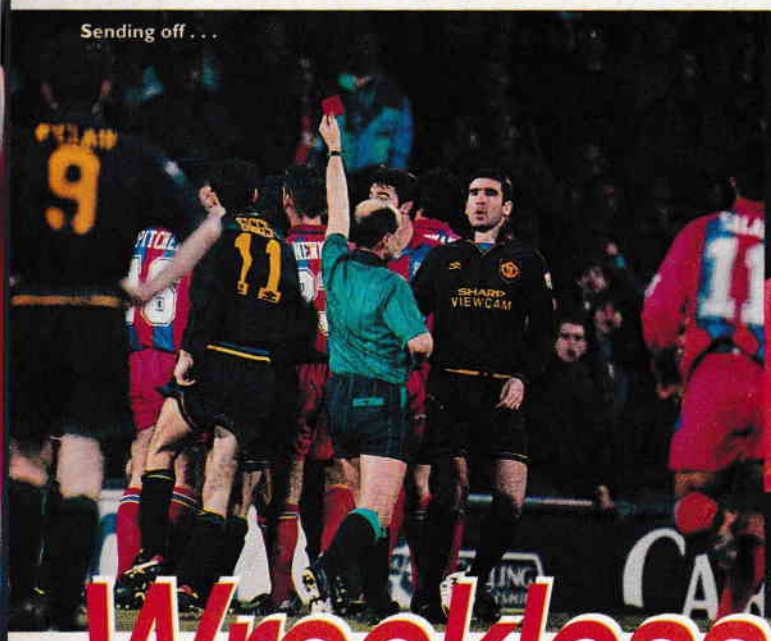
Shortly, Swiss TV will be able to cover 22 league games per season live Saturday or Sunday, at a kick-off time beyond the regular programme.

Swiss TV soccer has a chequered history. At time the broadcasters and the clubs were at odds and no football was shown at all. A major problem is the viewers can receive football from neighbouring Germany, Italy, France and Austria for nothing.

Compiled by Keir Radnedge. Additional reporting Paddy Agnew, Sean Creedon, Eric Nicholls, Arthur Rotmil, Alberto da Silva, Graham Turner.



Television is now a major player in football. Right across the Continent, as revealed here in our European screen guide, TV companies have a major stake in the game.


Sending off . . .

Mouthing off . . .

Wreckless Eric kicked

Eric Cantona may have played his final game for Manchester United, and possibly his last in England

ERIC CANTONA'S astonishing attack on a fan at Crystal Palace – a flying kung-fu kick in the chest followed by a flurry of punches – has brought condemnation from all quarters despite provocation in the form of the fan's abusive, racist taunts.

Cantona had been sent off, for the fifth time in his 16 months with United, when the fan's jibes led him to make what could be his last kick in the United Kingdom.

Manchester United suspended him from first-team football until the end of the season, and fined him two weeks' wages, the equivalent of £20,000. An FA inquiry could extend that ban to all domestic football, and if FIFA is asked to sanction the decision, Cantona could face a worldwide ban. Already, the French Federation has stripped him of the captaincy of France and suspended him from national team duty until the end of the season.

More serious still, is a police investigation into the incident, which could end in formal criminal charges being brought against him, and possibly Paul Ince, who was involved in the melee which followed.

While Cantona is left kicking his heels, United are left to pick up the pieces. The bad publicity generated by the whole affair has tarnished United's image around the globe, and led to millions being wiped from their share value.

The loss of Cantona's talent on the pitch, combined with an injury to Mark Hughes, could seriously threaten United's League and FA Cup challenge. Record £7million signing Andy Cole, from Newcastle, is still settling in at Old Trafford, despite scoring his first goal for United against Aston Villa. Now, he will be expected to lead the line with Cantona and Hughes missing, and winger Keith Gillespie having gone to Newcastle as part of the Cole deal.

It also leaves his manager, Alex Ferguson, in an unenviable position. He has backed his temperamental striker to the hilt in the past, but cannot offer much support this time round for an offence which is indefensible. The bottom line is this: if a supporter ran onto the pitch and attacked a player, he would be barred indefinitely from every ground in the country. There is no reason to feel that Cantona should be treated differently.

So, where does all this leave Cantona? In a fix, basically. Even if he is not banned worldwide, it is difficult to see where he could go. Most countries have now closed their transfer 'windows' for this season, and many clubs would be put off by his appalling disciplinary record and the fact that he is fast-approaching his 29th birthday.

The whole affair is yet another ugly blot on a season dominated by scandals. Following the Bruce Grobbelaar bung allegations [still no outcome on that one yet], the Paul Merson revelations [he has now completed his rehabilitation and made his comeback in the European Supercup against Milan at Highbury], the George Graham bung allegations and a string of controversial refereeing decisions, this is the last thing English football needed.

The great shame is that English football will almost certainly lose an immensely talented player. But, for all his merits, Cantona simply cannot be seen to get away with it this time. Having spent years trying to control the fans, the authorities must now ensure that players adhere to the same code of conduct.

Back in business . . . Paul Merson warms up at Highbury

Another nasty incident occurred a week later, when a fan attacked referee Rodger Gifford at the end of the match between Blackburn and Leeds United.

The game was full of controversy from the opening minute, when Rovers goalkeeper Tim Flowers was sent off for a trip outside the area. Alan Shearer put Kenny Dalglish's contenders in front from the penalty spot, but Leeds equalised with a debatable penalty five minutes from time. Then, as the teams left the pitch, an irate Blackburn fan ran onto the pitch and lunged at referee Gifford. Players from both sides did their best to protect the official, but the FA has now launched an inquiry which could cost Blackburn a hefty fine, closure of their stadium or even a points deduction, which could ruin their challenge for their first title since 1914.

On the same night, two players were sent off and *TEN* booked in a brutal clash between Newcastle and Everton at St James' Park. Everton had debutant Earl Barrett and midfielder Barry Horne sent off in the space of a minute, prompting manager Joe Royle to say: "That was the most insensitive display of refereeing I have seen in 30 years."

This is the latest development in a row which has been brewing all season between the referees and the managers. A week before, ref Paul Danson sent off West Ham's Alvin Martin for serious foul play, when all the veteran had done was fall over – in the opposition's half – accidentally bringing down a striker in the process. TV replays clearly showed no intent on Martin's part, leading to another stinging attack on the men in black from all sections of the football community. In Danson's defence, he later ammended Martin's dismissal to a caution, but the damage had been done.

The referee's job is now more difficult than ever. The new, FIFA-inspired interpretations are not popular in England, where the physical side of the game always has been emphasised, and the intensive TV coverage of games often highlights errors. But, when a ref makes a mistake, it would be a refreshing change if he were honest enough to admit it. That is all most managers want, a simple reassurance that match officials are working with them, and not against them.

Turning, at last, to events on the pitch, Blackburn are now five points clear of Manchester United, following the 1-1

Kicking off . . . Cantona's moments of madness

into touch

draw with Leeds, with both clubs having played 26 matches. Liverpool are third, eight points behind United, with Newcastle and Nottingham Forest a point further back.

Tottenham, relegation candidates at the start of the season, are now sixth, and have serious intentions of clinching a UEFA Cup place. Gerry Francis has restored confidence at White Hart Lane, and Tottenham are looking more like their old selves.

They have also made steady progress in the FA Cup, which provided few shocks in the fourth round. Result of the round was Crystal Palace's 2-1 win at Nottingham Forest, which – coupled with their run to the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola League Cup – has earned the Eagles a sunshine break in Cyprus.

At the bottom, Leicester and Ipswich are still in serious danger, though Ipswich have been showing some signs of life under new boss George Burley, including a 1-0 win at Anfield – the club's first ever in a competitive match.

Along with those two, any two from nine clubs are in danger. Aston Villa have hauled themselves out of immediate danger with some improved performances recently, but West Ham, Coventry and QPR have all slid into trouble.

● THE SEMI-FINALS of the Coca-Cola League Cup pair First Divison rivals Bolton with Swindon, and Liverpool with Crystal Palace. The draw ensures a Premiership v First Division final, with Liverpool and Bolton favourites for the trip down Wembley Way.

● NOTTS COUNTY are back at Wembley again, thanks to a shoot-out victory over Stoke City in the Anglo-Italian Cup semi-final.

This means a quick return to Wembley for new manager Howard Kendall, whose team now face Ascoli in the final. Brescia beat County 1-0 in last season's match.

● YOU'VE read the book, now see the play! It's not often that *WORLD SOCCER* gets to go to the theatre, so we went along to the Arts Theatre in London's West End to see *Fever Pitch*, an adaptation of Nick Hornby's best-selling book.

For those of you who have not read *Fever Pitch*, it is an intimate account of one man's obsession with football in general, and Arsenal in particular. A life measured out in Cup finals, disappointing away defeats and terrace boredom is common ground for most football fans.

Paul Hodson's adaptation works well, and should appeal to everyone.

Fever Pitch runs at the Arts Theatre until April 15, 1995 (tel: 0171-836-2132).

Happy 80th

SIR STANLEY MATTHEWS *(right)* celebrated his 80th birthday as guest of honour at a dinner in the potteries.

Sir Stan, the first player to be Knighted and first winner of the European Football of the Year award, was presented with a replica FA Cup medal having lost his own during his travels round the world.

All in all, it was a fitting tribute to one of the true legends of the game.

Wales

Bangor in the clear

REIGNING champions Bangor City moved into a 13-point lead early in the new year and many now consider them uncatchable.

Contenders Newtown were well beaten at Bangor, having been beaten at home in the previous match by Llansantffraid. A further defeat at Conwy United made it an horrific holiday programme for Newtown, who have been overtaken by Cwmbran Town.

Down in the relegation zone itself, three clubs continue to fight it out. Maesteg Park look doomed despite improved performances, including their first League win under new manager Craig Gill. Above them, much-improved Aberystwyth Town have caught up with Llanelli AFC with some fine exploits which have highlighted Meirion Appleton's success at moulding a spirited side determined to avoid the drop.

MEL AP IOR THOMAS

Northern Ireland

Crusaders cruising

WITH a third of the league campaign still to go unfashionable Crusaders seem to have the championship wrapped up.

The Belfast team, which manager Roy Walker has patiently built up over five years on a shoestring budget, has carved out an unassailable 16-point lead over fellow contenders Linfield, Portadown and Glenavon.

Crusaders, who last won the league title 19 years ago have made a virtue of single goal victories. With strong defence in front of Scottish goalkeeper Kevin McKeown, talented midfielders such as Sid Burrows and Steven Livinstone and sharpshooters Glenn Hunter and Stephen Baxter, Crusaders have suffered only one defeat, at home to Ards.

Last season's double winners Linfield, who have so far had a very disappointing campaign, have broken the Irish League transfer record with the signing of Paul McGee from Wimbledon for a reputed £40,000.

Yet another new managerial appointment was Kenny Shiels, former boss of Carrick Rangers, to fill the seat vacanted at Coleraine by Felix Healey.

ROY KITSON

Scotland

Motherwell's challenge falters

THE early season promise shown by a confident and attractive Motherwell side was decimated by a string of indifferent results during the first few weeks of 1995.

Widely acknowledged as the finest footballing side in Scotland and the one team capable of composing a meaningful challenger to Rangers, the Fir Park outfit, under the guidance of former international defender Alex McLeish, were enjoying a degree of status to which they had never previously experienced.

A series of mid-season defeats, however, (including a 6-1 thrashing by Dundee United) ended any lingering hopes they may have nurtured about snatching the title from Rangers' vice-like grasp. They now join the chasing clubs whose only meaningful objective is to join Coca-Cola League Cup winners Raith Rovers in next season's UEFA Cup.

One of the more pleasing knock-on effects of Motherwell's early season form was the belated call to international duty for defender Brian Martin. Martin, best be described as the archetypal footballing journeyman given that his career has revolved round unfashionable clubs like Albion Rovers, Falkirk and St Mirren, is playing undoubtedly the finest football of his life. Sadly for Martin, he sustained an injury in the build-up to Scotland's European Championship qualifier against Greece in December and he still awaits that elusive first cap.

Another side who showed early season promise before fading were Hibernian who, like Motherwell, carried brief, if perhaps tenuous championship aspirations prior to the turn of the year.

With Northern Ireland international midfielder Michael O'Neill enjoying a rich season of goalscoring form, Hibs threatened briefly but a succession of drawn matches has left them trapped among the chasing pack battling for UEFA Cup involvement.

Others in that category include Hearts, whose new manager Tommy McLean has effected numerous changes in personnel since his appointment last summer, and Celtic, whose credibility as a force in the Scottish game has been heightened by the acquisition of towering Dutch striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk (*see profile, page 24*). With Celtic hoping to raise £9.4 million in a share issue, manager Tommy Burns may yet be able to strengthen his playing resources further.

ALAN FAIRLEY

Argentina

River's title packs them in

RIVER PLATE won the opening championship of the National A Division – their 24th title in professional soccer since 1931.

They also finished unbeaten (in 19 games) – their first title win without defeat and with their highest points percentage (31 points out of 38) since their third title win in 1937.

Actually River Plate clinched the title three days before the end of the season without playing when San Lorenzo, their only challengers in the last few weeks, lost. San Lorenzo, who had previously gone 24 league games unbeaten also lost their final game, leaving River Plate with a five-point winning margin.

River Plate's final game, for which some 80,000 fans packed into their stadium to celebrate, was hardly an exhibition of great football even though nothing depended on it. A rough encounter against Velez Sarsfield, the Libertadores and World Club Cup winners, ended 1-1.

Americo Gallego, assistant coach until Daniel Passarella left to become national team manager, was in charge of the team for the last 24 games and lost none (although River Plate were knocked out of the Supercup by Boca Juniors on penalties). But he could not be persuaded to change his original plan to join Passarella and the national team.

Carlos Babington, the former international midfielder known as 'El Ingles', was given the job vacated at River Plate by Gallego.

River Plate were the best team, although they were not entirely convincing and once again individual superiority was an important factor. So was the return from Europe of their former midfield star, Enzo Francescoli, who finished as championship top scorer with 12 goals (followed by Boca Juniors' Sergio Martinez with eight). With four games to go Francescoli's 77th goal beat the club's scoring record, which had been held by his Uruguayan compatriot, Walter Gomez, since the 1950s.

On the same day another record ended. Deportivo Espanol's 42-year-old goalkeeper, Pedro Catalano was dropped after 338 consecutive appearances.

The tournament's best player was perhaps San Lorenzo's Paulo Silas, the former Brazilian international. The most improved teams were Newell's Old Boys, Argentinos Juniors and Belgrano Cordobo. But the other Cordoba club, Talleres, are in a bad way at the bottom of the table and lost two points when a fan ran on to their pitch and attacked a referee.

Boca Juniors continued to be erratic and finished in the lower half of the table for once. Their many fans were relieved when coach Cesar Menotti resigned with the idea of moving into politics. Luis Cubilla also resigned from Racing Club, who have not won a league title since 1966.

River's phoenix . . . Enzo Francescoli

1995 COPA AMERICA

THE DRAW for this year's South American Championship (for the Copa America), to be played in Uruguay from July 5-23, has been made, with the United States and Mexico again taking part as special guests.

Group A: Uruguay, Venezuela, Mexico, Paraguay.
Group B: United States, Bolivia, Argentina (champions), Chile.
Group C: Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador.

The top two of each group plus the two third-placed teams with the best records qualify for the quarter-final knock-out stage.

1995 LIBERTADORES CUP

TWO CLUBS will be taking part in this year's Libertadores Cup, the South American club championship, for the first time – Cerro (Uruguay) and Trujillanos (Venezuela).

The first round group draw is as follows:

Group 1: River Plate and Independiente (Argentina), Penarol and Cerro (Uruguay).
Group 2: Olimpia and Cerro Porteno (Paraguay), Caracas FC and Trujillanos (Venezuela).
Group 3: Universidad de Chile and Universidad Catolica (Chile), Atletico Nacional and Millonarios (Colombia).
Group 4: Palmeiras and Gremio (Brazil), Emelec and Nacional (Ecuador).
Group 5: Sporting Cristal and Alianza Lima (Peru), Bolivar and Wilsterman (Bolivia).

The first matches are scheduled for February 8, with group play continuing until April 13. The top three of each group and defending champions Velez Sarsfield of Argentina then advance to the two-legged knock-out second round, with the final legs taking place on June 7 and 14.

Brazil

Trouble on the town

JOHAN CRUYFF'S assistant at Barcleona, Carlos 'Charly' Rexach said of Romario's departure from Spain: "I think he could have problems back in Brazil."

Within 48 hours, events proved he was not so much of a Charly. One thing which time may teach Romario to appreciate is that the Catalan media were very patient and respectful of his 'fixtures away from home'. Or rather, away from the home he never gave Monica and their two children.

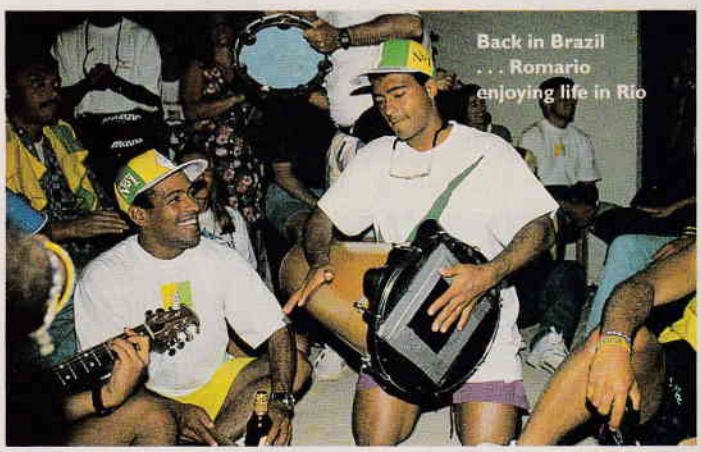
So it was not surprising that, after 18 months in three different hotel rooms, his wife refused to accompany him back to Barcelona after the Christmas break.

By that time, kiss-and-tell stories had already hit the headlines and, during his first night back home, a *paparazzo* spotted him getting into a red Porsche outside the Rio Palace in Copacabana and promptly had a quick flash at Romario and his companion in the short white dress who was clambering into the passenger seat.

After delivering the local equivalent of 'smashyafacein', the champ of champs drove off to meditate on the media siege which will inevitably accompany the return of the prodigal.

As one Barcelona fan said at the airport, "he thinks he's Maradona and now he's behaving like Maradona too."

GRAHAM TURNER



Back in Brazil . . . Romario enjoying life in Rio

Colombia

Bonus points prove vital

NACIONAL of Medellin won a closely-fought final round of the Colombian championship thanks to bonus points awarded for taking top place in both the season's opening and closing championships.

Nacional, coached by Colombian coach, Juan Pelaez, Millonarios (under Yugoslav Vladimir Popovic) and America all had seven points in the four-team final round, but finished in that order because National had two bonus points, Millionarios 1.5 and America 0.5.

Bonus points are awarded to the top four in each tournament – one to the first, 0.75 to the second, 0.50 to the third and 0.25 to the fourth. At the end of the season it is not the top teams which qualify for the final stages, but the top eight with most aggregate points in both tournaments.

The bonus points then count in the semi-final round from which the top two of two four-team groups advance to the final round. Bonus points are only taken into account if there is a tie on ordinary points – the case this year.

Nacional clinched their sixth title with a 1-0 win over local rivals Independiente, scoring with 15 minutes to go after they had been reduced to 10 men. Their first final round derby had also been hectic.

Nacional had a goal ruled off-side and protested to the referee who then changed his mind, bringing protests from Independiente players and a 15-minute hold-up. Independiente equalized near the end after Nacional had three men sent off.

Former veteran international, Arnoldo Iguaran fittingly scored Millonarios' 100th goal of the season – they join Nacional in the Libertadores Cup – but America's Ruben Hernandez finished as the season's top scorer with 32 goals. This, however, failed to get him a place in a 19-men squad picked for an Asian tour and this year's South American Championship in Uruguay.

Also left out were Adolfo Valencia, Faustino Asprilla and Freddy Rincon. However, one exile left out in the past for disciplinary reasons is back – Albeiro 'Palomo' Usurriaga has had an excellent season with Argentina's Independiente.

ERIC WEIL

CONMEBOL Cup

Reserves on top

THAT the Sao Paulo reserve team won the CONMEBOL Cup – equivalent to Europe's UEFA Cup – was fitting in a competition in which most participants fielded reserves at one time or another.

Some clubs which had qualified – the Colombians and Argentina's Boca Juniors – did not even participate and many games were played in empty stadiums .

Only about 200 spectators watched defending champions Botafogo play Venezuela's Minerven in Rio and the South American Confederation will have to seriously consider whether it is worth continuing this tournament, although the Libertadores Cup also took a few years to become popular.

Sao Paulo lost the second leg of the two-match final 3-0 to Penarol of Uruguay, but lifted the trophy thanks to a 6-1 win in the first leg.

Penarol pressurised from the start of the second leg and midfielder Bengoechea hit the crossbar from a free kick in the first half. The Uruguayans, beaten finalists last year against Botafogo of Brazil, finally scored through Martin Rodriguez in the 58th minute. Further goals came from Dario Silva in the 72nd minute and Rodriguez again two minutes later.

Penarol were unable to add to their score and Sao Paulo became the third Brazilian side to win the tournament in its three years of existence.

Sao Paulo decided to enter their reserve team because of their many other commitments. In the end it was the only trophy they won in 1994.

In contrast, the season's Supercup for past Libertadores Cup winners – which does have a bit more meaning although it also includes teams not currently in the top flight – was far more popular, with average attendances around 30,000 even though the final legs were played on weekday afternoons.

ERIC WEIL

Uruguay

The debts pile up

CHAMPIONS Penarol won all of their five games in the six-team 'Liquilla', held to pick the two Libertadores Cup candidates.

Cerro and Defensor Sporting tied for second place; Cerro won the play-off 5-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw and will compete in the Libertadores Cup for the first time in their 72-year history.

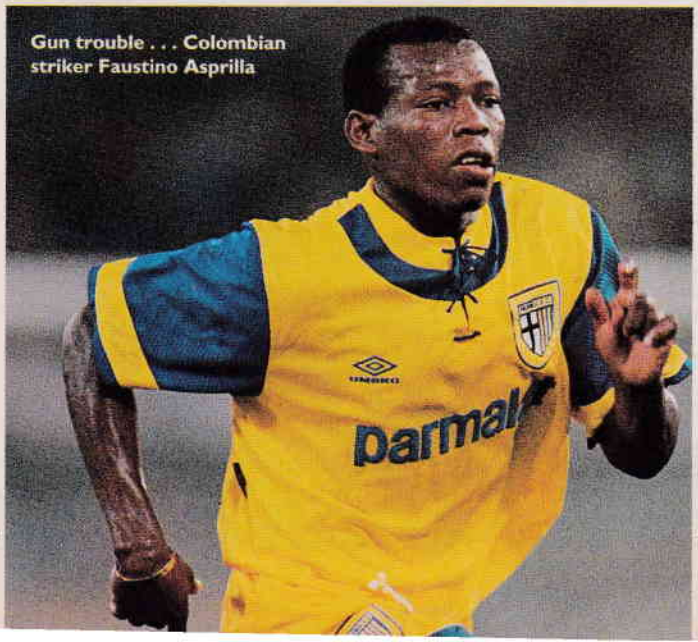
The 'Liquilla' was played between the five teams with most aggregate points in this season's opening and closing championships, plus newly-promoted Sud America, who finished fourth and will take part in the next CONMEBOL Cup along with third-placed Defensor Sporting.

Sud America's position is indicative of the economic plight of soccer in Uruguay. Most clubs are virtually bankrupt; Sud America went 30 games unbeaten while winning promotion, yet still owe their players five months wages. Things are unlikely to improve.

Clubs were helped by a payment from an Argentinian TV firm which bought the rights to league matches, but this only helped to pay off outstanding debts. There is less interest in transferring players to foreign clubs, a lifeline for the smaller clubs in the past. The Uruguayan FA's proposed solution is to reduce the number of clubs from the present 13 in the First Division and 10 in the Second Division.

Nacional face a crisis of another kind because of poor results and bad relations between coach Fernandez and some leading players. In the 'Liquilla' they finished fifth and lost to eternal rivals, Penarol, 2-1.

ERIC WEIL



Gun trouble . . . Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla

IN BOLIVIA: BOLIVAR won the first round of the championship by four points after beating second-placed Jorge Wilsterman 2-0 on the last day.

Both teams qualified for the Libertadores Cup while defending champions, The Strongest, were third, a further point back. Oscar Gonzalez, of Independiente Petrolero, was the top scorer with 19 goals.

IN CHILE: UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE, one of the country's most popular teams, won the First Division title for the first time since 1969 after a season-long fight with rivals Universidad Catolica.

On the last day of the season they got the point they needed away to Cobresal, who were already doomed to relegation but fought all the way. The champions only equalised 13 minutes from the end.

The title had probably been decided three weeks earlier when Universidad de Chile beat Universidad Catolica 1-0 in front of 82,000 spectators to take a two-point lead. Universidad Catolica complained bitterly at referee Carlos Robles, first for sending off star midfielder, Argentinian international Nestor Gorosito, just before half-time, then for allowing Marcelo Salas to score Universidad de Chile's winner from an apparently off-side position.

Another Argentinian international, Alberto Acosta, was top scorer with 33 goals.

IN ECUADOR: EMELEC narrowly retained the title from Nacional after winning the six-team final round. Both teams go into the next Libertadores Cup. Manuel Uquillos, of Espoli, took the goal-scoring honours with 25 goals.

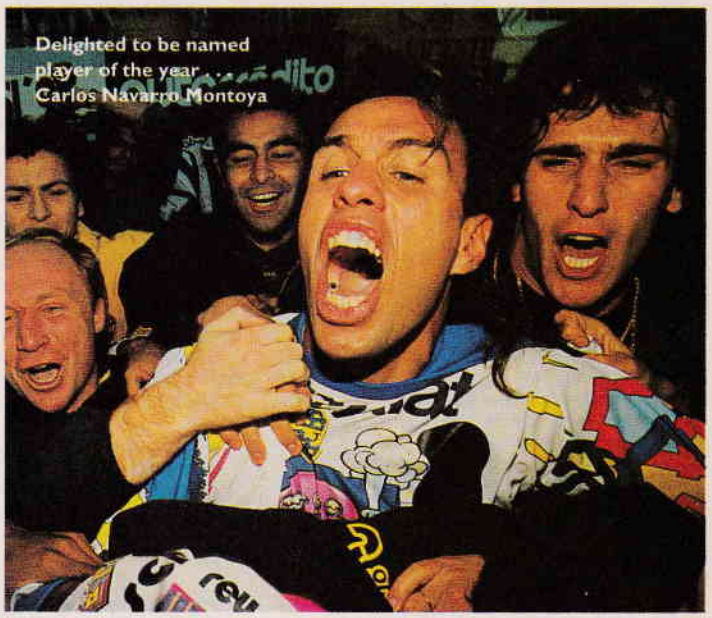
IN PARAGUAY: DEFENDING champions Olimpia easily won the second round of the First Division championship, six points ahead of first-round winners, Cerro Porteno. The two teams then faced each other in a title play-off. The first clash ended 1-1, the second 0-0; Cerro Porteno won the penalty shoot-out 4-3.

ERIC WEIL

IN PERU: UNIVERSITARIO DE DEPORTES of Lima, in dire financial trouble following the withdrawal of sponsors Nicolini, have sold Argentinian Marcelo Asteggiano to Sporting Cristal while another defender, Juan Reynoso, has joined Cruz Azul of Mexico.

Alianza have bought intelligently for their Libertadores Cup campaign, selling Marco Valencia to Sipesa and acquiring Brazilians Marquinho, from Casino Salzburg in Austria, and Gerson Lente, from local rivals Ciclista.

PETER HUDSON



Delighted to be named player of the year . . . Carlos Navarro Montoya

MEN IN THE NEWS

CARLOS NAVARRO MONTOYA, Boca Juniors' 28-year-old Colombian-born goalkeeper, has been voted top player of 1994 by Argentinian sports journalists.

CARLOS VALDERRAMA, the former Colombian national team captain, set the Argentinian close season transfer market moving with his transfer from Independiente Medellin to Newell's Old Boys.

CLAUDIO TAFFAREL, effectively unemployed since helping Brazil win the World Cup last July, has joined Brazilian side Atletico Mineiro from Italian side Parma. He was on loan to fellow Serie A side Reggiana last season.

SILVIO MARZOLINI, former Boca Juniors and international defender, has replaced Cesar Menotti at Boca Juniors. Marzolini coached the first team in 1981 when they won the title with Diego Maradona in the line-up.

JULIO COMESANA, the Uruguayan coach who took Atletico Junior to the title in 1993, was dismissed after failing to qualify for the final round this season.

FAUSTINO ASPRILLA, the Colombian striker playing in Italy for Parma, was released on bail after returning home to face firearms charges relating to an alleged incident on New Year's Eve.

BRANCO, the Brazilian international defender, has left Corinthians to team up with World Cup team-mate Romario at Flamengo.

MARGARIDA, the eccentric Brazilian referee who broke a sporting taboo by openly displaying his homosexuality during games, has died of AIDS-related pneumonia, aged 40.

Results and tables start on page 54.

ERIC WEIL

Where Super Eagles dare

Nigeria's national coach, Shaibu Amodhou, spoke to WORLD SOCCER*'s Mark Gleeson*

SHAIBU AMODHOU was appointed national coach of Nigeria last September in succession to the controversial Dutchman Clemens Westerhof, who had introduced the tactical and technical discipline which took Nigeria to the World Cup finals but alienated many of his star players along the way. Shaibu had earned a significant domestic reputation with his work as coach of BCC Lions of Gboko.

WORLD SOCCER: How are you enjoying what is probably one of the toughest jobs in football?
SHAIBU Amodhou: You are right, it certainly is a very difficult job with a lot of pressure. But It is also a tough challenge and the tougher the better for a man who is ambitious. I am like that and so is my entire coaching crew. We are very enduring people and we will persevere.

What difficulties have you already had to deal with?
There have been a lot of hiccups. I am not yet settled in this job. A few weeks after my appointment I had to rush to prepare a team for the Wembley match [the friendly against England in November which Nigeria lost 1-0] and I had to rush again to prepare another team for the Intercontinental Cup in Riyadh. Now, I am going to settle down to work out a proper training plan that will give us an effective programme ahead of our defence of the Nations Cup in South Africa next year.

What sort of mandate have you been given by the Nigerian Football Association and what sort of goals have you been set?
That's easy. Nigeria is the defending champion of the African Nations Cup and, although they have not spelt it out, I realise that I have a responsibility to improve upon our past standards. We have to try as hard as possible to defend the Nations Cup successfully and, at the same time, see Nigeria through the qualifiers for the next World Cup.

So you have your sights set on at least four years in charge . . .
For now, I have a renewable contract of two years and that means that if all goes well within that period it can be renewed for another two years.

There has been talk of bringing in a foreign coach because many Nigerians believe a local man cannot do the job . . .
I'm sorry for our country if some of us up this day do not believe in ourselves. I believe that the best thing that can happen to Nigeria is if we start believing in ourselves. For now, I've been told that a foreign coach will be appointed but he will not be in charge of the team. He will only be employed in an advisory capacity and for this I do not have any objections. But if there is going to be any twisting of arms such that it will relegate my powers I will not stay one day longer.

Are saying you will not be prepared to be coach of Nigeria in name only as was the recent case with Christian Chikwu?
I've said it before. So long as anyone is not going to usurp my powers, I have no problems with an advisor. But if I am relegated to the background, I definitely will not stay a day longer. I am re-emphasising it.

Do you feel that African coaches are not getting the recognition they perhaps deserve?
Of course that is true. Everywhere in Africa they don't give any recognition. And we are fighting this, it is a crusade. We African coaches are saying no to these foreign people because we never get the best foreign coaches coming to work in our countries. The coaches who come to Africa only come to exploit the talents we have produced. It's just a question of never getting any exposure. We should be given equal opportunity because we can do better. That's all we are saying.

Do you think it needs something like an African coach leading an African team to success in a tournament like the World Cup to change people's minds?
I think that is the only way and we are praying that our countrymen should see the light and give us the opportunity to try and see what we can prove.

Looking ahead now to the African Nations Cup finals next year, Nigeria do not have to qualify. What programme of preparation are you planning?
We will hurry to prepare things in preparation for the Nations Cup and we are going to turn out a good programme with the priority on South Africa '96. The bulk of our experienced professional players based in Europe will be brought home for trial matches to keep them in tune and keep them together. The more international matches we are able to organise the better it will be for us in South Africa. In the past, we have also neglected the home-based players because we still have a lot of potential to work with in Nigeria. We will also start a programme to blood those players because some players in the present squad are ageing and will be retiring soon and we will need successors for them. We cannot remain idol and only depend on the boys in Europe. They are, no doubt, the key but we have to get new talent and integrate them slowly.

Is there a chance that players from recent under-20 and under-17 sides, who have since moved to Europe, like Wilson Oruma and Nwankwu Kanu will figure in your plans?
Of course, yes. They have a good chance of making the senior team.

You are certainly the team to beat in Africa. Does this put a lot of pressure on you?
Well . . . I'm still new in the job. But all my life I have not liked to work under pressure. I identify the importance of every match or every tournament and I work towards this goal. But I don't work under pressure. I keep my calm always. The fact that Nigeria is the team to beat makes us proud.

Nigeria must be favoured to get at least one of the five places for Africa at the World Cup in France. If you qualify, what would you like to see Nigeria achieving in France?
I wish, if I'm there or not as coach, Nigeria will go past the second round, even as far as the final, because we had the chance to do that in the USA but threw it away in just three minutes against Italy. It was a big lesson. Taking that experience, we can improve on our preparation and performance. We have the potential to beat the world.

There has been a lot of talk over the years of Africa eventually producing a world champion. Which African country will that be?
South Africa is coming up very strong now, but Nigeria will certainly be among those candidates. If you look around the world today, you will see that Nigeria has more professional players than any other Africa country. The wider the base, the taller the pyramid. We still have a very good collection of youngsters coming up, so I think we have the potential to prove that.

New man . . . Super Eagles boss Shaibu Amodhou

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

CAMEROON CRASH TO ZIMBABWE

A CRUSHING defeat for Cameroon and a shock away draw for Burkina Faso were the surprise results in the latest round of the 1996 African Nations Cup qualifying campaign.

Zimbabwe, inspired by a hat-trick from midfielder Vitalis Takawira, hammered Cameroon 4-1, to leave the World Cup finalists trailing behind in their bid to qualify for next year's finals.

Burkina Faso, one of the rank outsiders in this year's tournament, came from two goals down to hold Ivory Coast to a 2-2 draw in Abidjan and strengthen their growing reputation.

Tanzania came from behind to beat Algeria 2-1 in Dar-es-Salaam. They now share top place in Group 4 with Egypt, who drew 0-0 away against Uganda.

Senegal, playing their first match under new coaches Karim Sega Diouf and Boubacar Cisse, got an injury-time equaliser to force a 1-1 draw with Liberia in Group 2.

Tiny Gambia forced a 1-1 draw in Niger, for their second point in Group 3, where Ghana are the runaway leaders. The Black Stars beat Congo 3-1 to maintain their 100 per cent record.

Ethiopia, who had a dismal start to the qualifiers last year, won a second successive game by beating Sudan 2-0 in Group 4.

In Group 7, Angola's 2-1 away win over Botswana takes them to the top alongside Mali.

- THE CAF has confirmed that the 1996 African Nations Cup finals will be played in South Africa from January 13 to February 3 next year.
- ESPERANCE of Tunisia beat Daring Club Motema Pembe of Zaire 3-0 to win the African Supercup.

BROOKING talkback

BBC Radio and TV commentator TREVOR BROOKING, the former England midfielder, answers your letters . . .

THIS is your chance to join the debates on soccer's big issues. Send you views to Trevor Brooking, the TV analyst and former England and West Ham player, and he will reply to a selection each month.
● Write to Trevor Brooking c/o *WORLD SOCCER*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London, SE1 9LS. The comments are Trevor Brooking's opinions and do not necessarily reflect *WORLD SOCCER*'s views. He will only answer those letters published.

KEEPING THE FAITH

TREVOR – In the past, England have had more than their fair share of world-class keepers, with Banks, Shilton, Clemence etc. Now, in the Premiership, less than half the first-choice keepers are English. We have Norwegians, Danes, Canadians, Czechs, Dutch, Russians, Zimbabweans and Australians keeping goal. It's a joke!
PHILIP TARRY, Nether Edge, Sheffield

THERE IS no obvious reason for the present shortage of English talent but I am sure another cycle of quality goalkeepers will emerge in the future, especially with the number of specialised coaches now being employed by Premier League clubs. Goalkeepers themselves might also argue their job has become more difficult anyway, with the lightweight footballs now in use. They cause more unpredictable movement in flight, and enable players to strike the ball with more pace and ferocity.

JONES THE FOOTBALLER

TREVOR – Since when was Vinnie Jones a Welshman? In the run-up to the World Cup he was prancing around in an Ireland shirt telling everyone how Irish he feels. Six months later, he's belting out the Welsh anthem in Cardiff! What happened? Did he discover that his great aunt's pet tortoise was from the Brecon Beacons?
DANIEL BROWN, Horspath, Oxford

I DON'T really blame players like Vinnie Jones for grabbing at an international opportunity, wherever it may crop up. For me, the guilty party is more the National Association itself, for allowing the situation to develop in the first place. The manager must also shoulder some of the blame, and should only allow himself to attempt such change in allegiance when he is disputing a quite exceptional talent. In this particular case, unexpected defeats against Moldova and Georgia called for desperate measures, but the decision taken was a big mistake.

LEFT OUT OF AFRICA

TREVOR – Why is it that African champions are not included in the World Club Championship? It is about time Africa clubs were included.
STEPHEN PANYIN DANSO, Dansoman, Accra, Ghana

CERTAINLY the rather tepid affair between Milan and Velez Sarsfield in Tokyo back in December strengthens your claim. But if an African club's inclusion is warranted, why not an Asian one too? The main stumbling block to any expansion ideas is, of course, the fixture congestion facing the more successful clubs. They would be reluctant to add yet more demands on their players, and the quality and entertainment of matches would suffer. In December Milan's form was poor and so helped Velez Sarsfield from Argentina complete a significant upset, but the game failed to come near previous standards set. Because of these problems I cannot see still further fixtures being justified.

CHANGING PLACES

TREVOR – Do you think that England must change their way of playing (just as Brazil did in the 1994 World Cup), to win Euro '96? Do you think that if England do not change and do not win, they will then change their style?
PAULO GONCALVES, Moita, Portugal

YOU mentioned Brazil's change of style for their 1994 World Cup success, but predominately it was the fact they had better defenders this time round. Terry Venables has gone for the so-called umbrella formation, involving five men in midfield and a lone striker up front – usually Alan Shearer. My only concern is whether this patient style will be acceptable to home supporters. The other key factor is that currently England are blessed with some excellent goalscorers. This suggests to me it is worth giving Shearer a striker partner. The player likely to leapfrog all the contenders, is Liverpool's Robbie Fowler who, although only 20 in April, seems destined for a great international career.

BITTERSWEET FA

TREVOR – The FA has become the laughing stock of British sport. Graham Kelly & co have shown how much they know by proposing that Irish, Scottish and Welsh players in the Premiership should be counted as foreigners. If they looked back at England's great club sides they would see that all had a good selection of non-Englishmen: Mackay, Law, Blanchflower, Best, Dalglish, Rush etc.

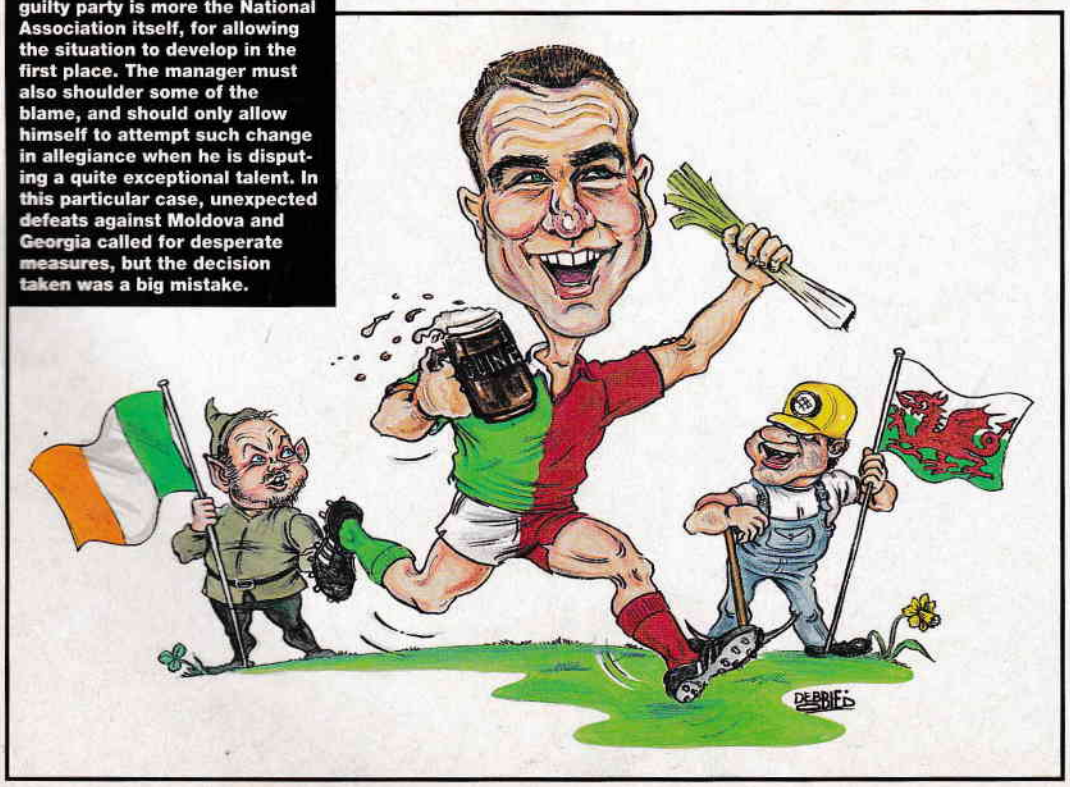
The argument that homegrown talent will be given a fairer chance by axing 'foreign' players is incorrect, because the Premiership will fall to the standard of the First Division. The FA shouldn't be implementing the foreigners rule. They should be telling UEFA to scrap it.
JOE MURPHY, Solihull, West Midlands

I DON'T think anyone could dispute the contribution British players have made to the excitement and competitiveness of our domestic leagues. Unfortunately UEFA eventually decided that if Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were continuing to run their own national teams, then that 'foreign rule' should also apply to club selection for European games. This interpretation has clearly caused serious selection difficulties for teams like Manchester United, and naturally influenced their transfer activity, as in the case of Andy Cole. Whether it yet needs to be extended to the domestic league is extremely doubtful, as it would weaken the strength in depth of the players available. As it stands at the moment it only seriously affects those clubs actively involved in Europe, and even then can be cushioned by the ruling on assimilated players.

OVER LOOKED DOWN UNDER

TREVOR – FIFA's recent decisions are a step in the wrong direction. To award eight extra spots for the next World Cup is obviously a political decision by Havelange and an obvious ploy to gain votes from the Asian and African confederations. Europe got a very short straw but not nearly as short as Oceania. Even though Australia's passage is easy enough, having only to beat the fourth-placed Asian team, it is still an insult to Australia's achievements in the past three years.
CAMERON PEAKE, New South Wales, Australia

I AM obviously biased, but Europe definitely received the worst deal. After supplying seven of the eight World Cup quarter-finalists, I felt they deserved more than just two of the additional places, especially when you also consider the number of 'new' countries being formed in recent years. While Australia have certainly progressed in the last three years, the overall standards still need to be maintained, and so any qualifying system needs to limit any lightweight passage of entry. You accept Australia should now be capable of qualifying, and if they fail to do so, then it must be assumed they have still not improved sufficiently. I don't accept the need to expand by these further eight places; the only small consolation of switching to 32 finalists is that with eight groups of four, we won't have to exert our mathematical brain cells in working out which third-placed countries have made it to the final 16.



UNITED STATES

Ramos joins Mexico exodus

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER (MLS), the new pro league that was supposed to begin this April, but has now postponed operations until 1996, has signed its first player.

Tab Ramos, star of the US national team, has been bought from his Spanish club Real Betis. Bought by the league, that is – as yet the MLS has no clubs. So Ramos, without a club to play for, has been loaned to the Mexican club UANL Tigres.

Mexico seems to be the favoured destination for American World Cup players at the moment – other recent moves south of the border include Mike Sorber (UNAM), Dominic Kinnear (Necaxa), and Marcelo Balboa (Leon).

MLS remains confident that, come April 1996, it will be able to lure back not only Ramos and the other 'Mexicans', but all the other US stars currently playing overseas.

For a league that has no clubs and just one player under contract, the MLS is showing remarkable audacity when it comes to laying down the law. The football Laws, that is. The current FIFA Laws, it seems, are not to the MLS liking, so it has already asked FIFA for permission to make a couple of modifications.

All in the interests of the game, you understand: "We believe the rule changes we have proposed can help make the great sport of soccer even more entertaining for its fans," said MLS chairman Alan Rothenberg.

The two requested changes are: one, allowing a player the option of a throw-in or a kick-in when the ball goes out of play; two, penalising encroachment by an automatic yellow card to the offender, and making the wall move back 15 yards from the ball (this rule to have effect only within 35-yards of the defending team's goal).

These changes come from a whole series of experiments carried out last year by the United States Interregional Soccer League, a nationwide semi-pro league with 72 teams.

Chief architect and assessor of the changes is former Welsh international Phil Woosnam, who was the Commissioner of the now defunct North American Soccer League in its heyday in the 1970s.

The kick-in option proved popular in the two USISL Divisions that tried it. It was chosen over a throw-in nearly nine times out of 10, and was held to get the ball into play more quickly, and to "create more goal-mouth action." As with a throw-in, there was no off-side on a kick-in.

Only two of the changes were rejected outright in Woosnam's report: the use of corner kicks as a tie-breaker, and awarding an extra standings-point to teams with a higher corner kick count. Further experimentation in 1996 was recommended for the other eight changes.

Two trials of larger goals were carried out: one with a goal of 25'6" x 8'6", the other with a goal of 28' x 8'6". The assessment is cautious: "the larger goals did seem to increase the scoring somewhat", with the test divisions averaging 0.8 of a goal more than the other divisions, but more testing is recommended.

Two of the changes involved keeping a tally of individual and team fouls. Five personal fouls resulted in a player being ejected – though he could be replaced by a substitute. When a team recorded its seventh foul, the opposing team was awarded a "live shoot-out". For this, a player started with the ball 35-yards from the goal, and dribbled in on the goalkeeper; all the other players were moved back to the half-way line, but could begin moving as soon as the shoot-out commenced. About two-thirds of the attempts resulted in a goal.

The personal-foul rule was less successful, because coaches were able to substitute players when they reached four fouls (the USISL allows four substitutes per team per game).

Three of the USISL's Divisions experimented with short corner kicks; if the ball went out for a corner kick within 18 yards of the goal, the corner was taken from an arc drawn on the field at the junction of the goal-line and the penalty area. An innovation, says Woosnam's report that was "positively received by coaches, players and fans." Approximately 6 out of every 10 corners were short corners. No data, apparently, was recorded on how many goals resulted from short corners.

Also tested was a change to introduce a 60-minute game clock. The clock was stopped whenever the ball went out of bounds, and at all dead ball situations. The main idea was to cut out time wasting. But the change was also seen as particularly relevant to

Down Mexico way . . . Tab Ramos has joined UANL Tigres on loan

American fans, who are used to their pro sports (grid-iron football, basketball and hockey) being controlled by a timekeeper with a very visible clock.

Statistics had shown that during the 90-minute games of the 1990 World Cup in Italy, the actual playing time averaged 56 minutes. In the USISL experiment, games were played in 30-minute halves – thus requiring four minutes more of actual playing time than recorded in Italy.

It was found that, using the 60-minute clock, games took an average of 97.2 minutes to complete. It seems likely that the MLS, when it does finally begin operations, will use a game-clock.

Remarkably absent from the USISL's 1994 catalogue of rule changes was any attempt to modify the offside rule. That will be taken care of in 1995, when the USISL will experiment with the elimination of off-side within a 35-yard zone at each end of the field.

Sounds familiar? Indeed – this was the rule used for many years in the old NASL. It was dreamed up by . . . Phil Woosnam.

PAUL GARDNER

MEXICO

THE first steps to a reduction of teams in First Division from 20 to 16, are now taking place.

This will happen in two stages, the first over the next two seasons with two relegations and one promotion each year, thus reducing the teams to 18; and by the year 2000, following the same system, the total will go down to 16.

This is a wise decision, because only 15 teams can be considered to have a strong economic basis. Leon, Tigres UNL, Correcaminos UAT and TM Queretaro are in dire trouble.

The competition needs upgrading in a country where 90-odd professional teams compete in 65 cities.

America, Necaxa and Guadalajara are the three best teams so far. Dutch coach Leo Beenhakker is now with America, and Africans Biyik, Bwalya and Pagan complement Mexican such as Zague, Del Olmo, Gutierrez, Luis Garcia (back after his disappointing adventure in Spain) and Chavez.

Necaxa rely on a Mexican-Chilean-Equadorian base, namely Ambriz-Garcia Aspe-Aguinaga-Bassay, and a Mexican coach, Manuel Lapuente, former international and twice champion as coach of Puebla.

Guadalajara, on the other hand, following their tradition of never signing foreign players, have secured some big Mexican names – De la Torre, Ramon Ramirez, Coyote, Alberto Garcia and Espinoza. And Alberto Guerra is thought by many as a better coach for the Mexican team than Mejla Baron.

The national side again lost on penalty kicks in a major competition, this time in Saudi Arabia in the Intercontinental Cup against Denmark.

But the players who took third place in Riyadh complained that out of the $800,000 the team received, only $200,000 went to them as premium payments.

CARLOS F. RAMIREZ

COSTA RICA

THE UNDER-23 squad claimed a spot at the 1995 Pan American Games in Mar del Plata, Argentina, with a resounding 2-0 away win over Honduras, who also qualified as Central American Zone runners-up.

In the league, defending champions Saprissa continue to set the pace, but lost a great opportunity to extend their lead over unfancied San Carlos, when they could only draw 1-1 with bottom placed Limon.

EL SALVADOR

AFTER 21 matches, the First Division has become a two-horse race, with Luis Angel Firpo holding a one-point advantage over FAS.

The sole threat to the leaders' supremacy comes from Aquila, who stayed in touch with a 3-2 win over rivals Alianza thanks to a last minute goal by Alberto Castillo.

FRENCH GUYANA

ALL SIX games in the eighth round of the French Guyana League ended in away victories – four by the only goal, the others 3-2.

US Sinnamary went to the top by winning away to Geldar Kourou, thanks to Andre Louis-Louisy's seventh goal of the season.

GUATEMALA

COMUNICACIONES strengthened their position at the top of the First Division table with 5-1 and 6-1 wins over Izabal JC and Mictlan, respectively.

Those victories also helped to guarantee the 'Cremas' a place in the championship's final round. Municipal continue to hold second place, one point behind the leader. Suchitepequez find themselves eight points off the pace in third.

HONDURAS

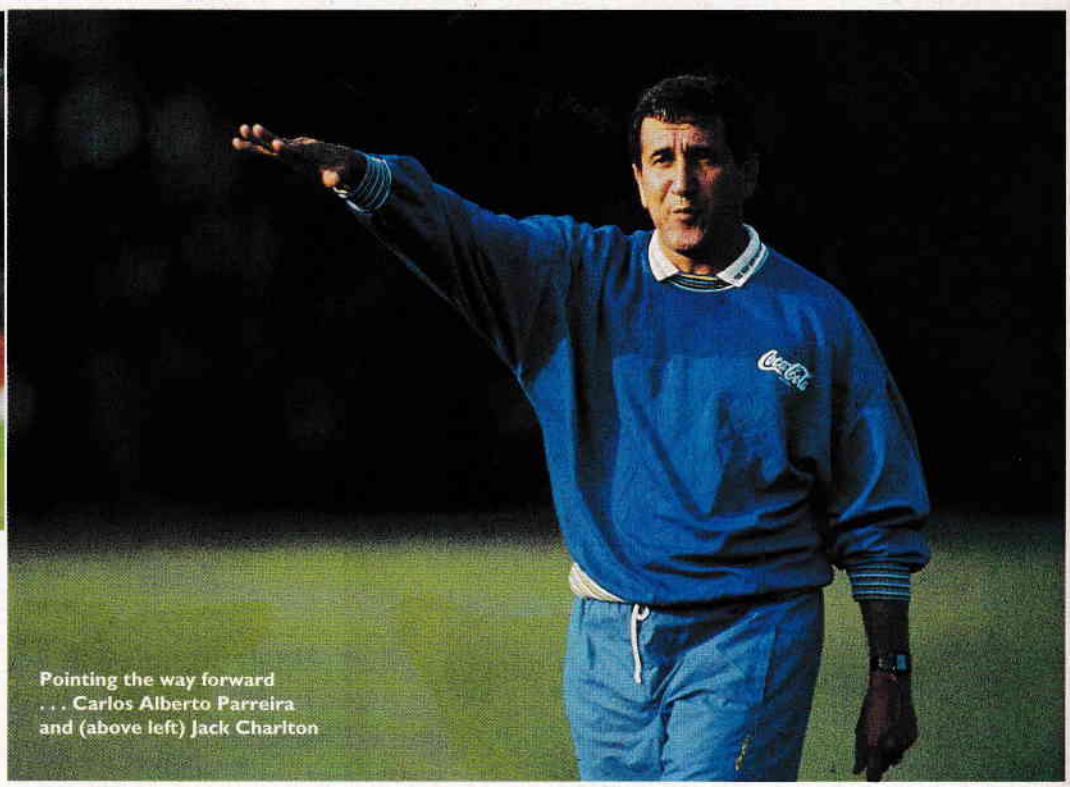
THOUGH the season is still young, it would take a miracle for any team to catch Olimpia.

They have gone undefeated in 11 matches, winning nine of them and conceding only three goals. Half of the team's 24 goals have been scored by Cristian Santamaria and Juan Flores, with seven and five, respectively.

SCOTT GLEBA

FOOTBALL COACHES AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

The Rattlesnake who won the World Cup



Pointing the way forward . . . Carlos Alberto Parreira and (above left) Jack Charlton

HOW DID Brazil come to win last year's World Cup tournament in the United States? Because they had a rattlesnake on their side!

Brazilian coach, Carlos Alberto Parreira, uses the term "rattlesnake" to describe one of his team's tacticial ploys – making many passes to mesmerise opponents, and then launching the decisive strike.

This was one of the many fascinating tales to emerge from the symposium in Portugal organised by the European Union of Football Coaches.

The "snake" was one of Parreira's key areas. He emphasised that the squad had one target: to win the trophy. Anything less would be deemed as failure.

His players were proud to maintain the aura of Brazilian football and to follow so many famed wearers of the yellow shirt. He built on their existing style, and said: "We never change our methods to suit the opposition, but always play our own way."

Parreria and his staff used a prolonged period of preparation with friendly games leading up to the tournament, and insisted on the highest standards: zero mistakes and maximum efficiency.

Brazil also paid great attention to matters off the field, such as relationships with other people they met during the event, and dealing with the media.

There were 300 Brazilian media people at USA '94, and according to Parreira they are "the fiercest in the world."

Jack Charlton, manager of the Republic of Ireland team, was another speaker at the symposium, outlining his football philosophy as it related to running a national squad.

Charlton emphasised the need for players to be made aware of team tactics as early as possible, and pointed out that the system followed by the coach depended on the abilities of the players available.

"New methods can bring early sucess, but then they can be countered by opponents making adjustment," he said. "We always like to play new opponents who might not know too much about our style."

Charlton also pointed out that his players try to do their defending in the opposing half of the field, and aimed to make the other team's full-backs turn as often as possible, in the hope of pressing them so much that they commit errors.

Although these tactics often bring criticism, the Republic's record since Charlton took over proves that they can succeed.

Do you have any comments on these views? If so, please write to Rob Littleford at Penmore House, Hasland Road, Chesterfield.

● NEWS of the 48th annual convention of the National Soccer Coaches of America, at which AFCAT were represented, has been held over.

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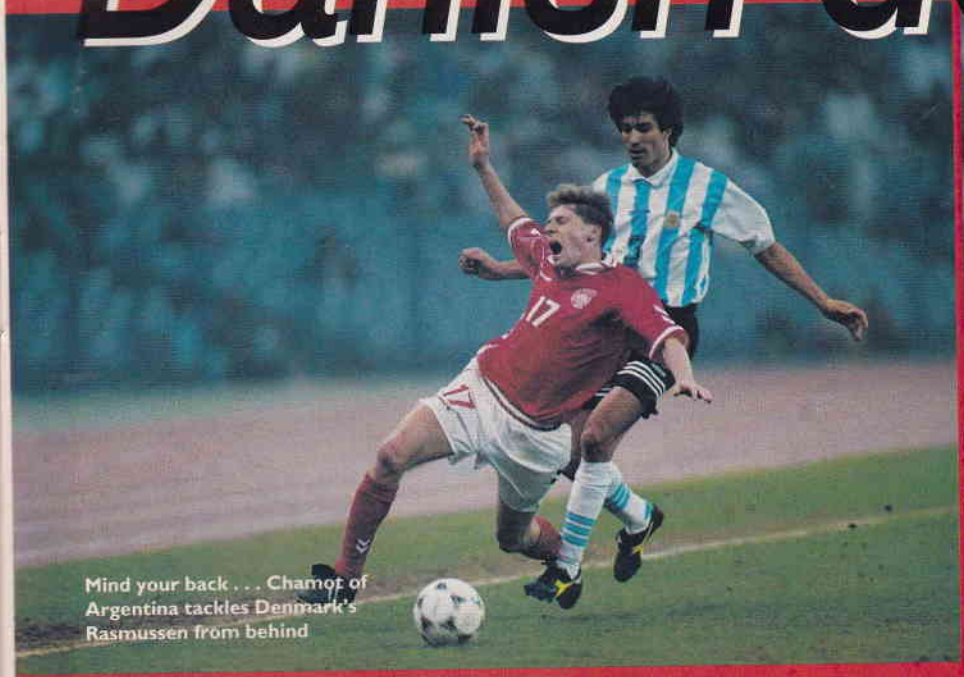
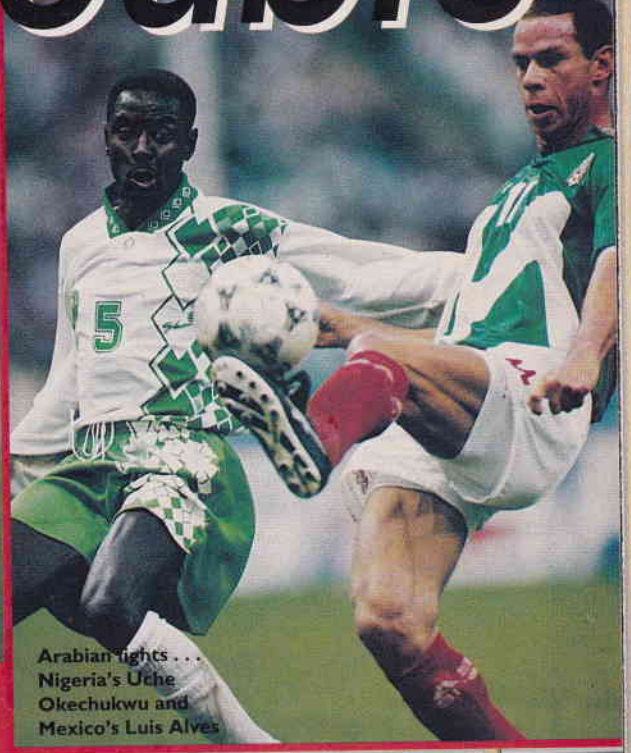
Danish double



Mind your back . . . Chamot of Argentina tackles Denmark's Rasmussen from behind



Arabian lights . . . Nigeria's Uche Okechukwu and Mexico's Luis Alves

Mark Gleeson and Gary Bloom in Saudi Arabia see another unexpected success for Denmark

A feast fit for a king . . . and Joao Havelange

DENMARK's penchant for pulling off the unexpected stretched to the second Intercontinental Cup in Saudi Arabia, with victory for a virtual second-string outfit.

Just as they had done in Sweden in the European Championships of 1992, the Danes came from nowhere to take the title, plodding through the early rounds and saving their best for last.

A significant proportion of Richrd Moller Nielsen's starting line-up had been unavailable. There was no Peter Schmeichel, Lars Olsen, Flemming Povlsen, John Jensen or Thomas Helveg, and the Danish-based players were in the middle of the end-of-season break.

But several did come hoping to force a place in Denmark's European Championship plans. And twice they saved face in the final minute of their group matches as they progressed to the championship.

The Danes, representing Europe at the eight-day affair, were drawn in Group A with Mexico, the CONCACAF Gold Cup winners of 1992 and the Saudi Arabian hosts, who had no particular claim to play in the tournament other than spending several million dollars on its organisation.

Argentina, winners of the first Intercontinental Cup in 1992 and Copa America holders, were in the other group with African Champions Nigeria and Japan, reigning Asian champions.

A 2-0 win for Mexico in the first game, against the Saudis, seemed routine enough, but in the second game of the group Denmark looked fairly pedestrian against a Saudi team seemingly still hungover from their World Cup heroics.

Save for a superb piece of skill by Brian Laudrup, handed the captaincy for the first time, which gave them a first-half goal, Denmark looked destined for a 1-0 victory, which would have put them behind Mexico on goal difference and given the CONCACAF champions the option of playing for a draw in their final group match against the Danes to qualify for the final.

But Dundee's Morten Wieghorst stubbornly burst through the defence to blast home from close range with the last kick, and establish parity with the Mexicans.

That was Denmark's first piece of good fortune, and it was extended in the final group match against the Mexicans.

Originally, a draw would have meant the outcome being decided by lots, but sanity prevailed and the teams decided beforehand to conduct a shoot-out should the match finish level. That never looked likely to happen as Mexico held sway. The Danish team were reinforced by the destroyer of Barcelona, Michael Laudrup, but did not look the better for his belated arrival.

When Luis Garcia scored in the 70th minute, his third of the tournament, Mexico looked as good as in the final, but Denmark scored in the closing stages when a momentary lapse allowed Peter Rasmussen to head home.

The Danes then won the shoot-out, Mexico performing as dismally as they had in the World Cup against Bulgaria last year.

Denmark then sat through the Group B clash between Argentina and Nigeria, to discover the identity of their opponents. Nigeria had started with an easy 3-0 win over a game but hapless Japan, only for Argentina to win 5-1 in their game with the Asian champions.

So a draw would be good enough for Argentina, and that is what they got against a Nigerian side playing with all the look of champions but again failing to deliver.

Argentina's Daniel Passarella has assembled a remarkably young team, gambling on his own reputation and that of his country as he tries to build for France in 1998.

The talent is there, but not as yet refined. Even with Gabriel Batistuta and Jose Chamot bringing their experience of Italy's Serie A, there are still a lot of lessons to learn.

Ariel Ortega is possibly a successor to Diego Maradona, and Sebastian Rambert a striker in the making. – Italian clubs have been watching both – as well as defenders Roberto Ayala, the new captain, and Javier Zanetti.

There also was talk of 19-year-old forward Hernan Crespo of River Plate being on the Serie A shopping list, but Passarella did not play him and there was no chance to establish his credentials.

So to the final and another bit of good fortunate for the Danes, this time after just nine minutes, when Christian Bassedas conceded a penalty with a clumsy trip on Jens Hogh, on a rare foray forward.

The penalty was efficiently converted by Michael Laudrup, who then limped off with a thigh strain and thereby solved Denmark's big dilemma – how to play both him and younger brother Brian in the same team.

Brian then appeared and did not disappoint, setting up a decisive goal in the 74th minute for Peter Rasmussen. He collected a pass just inside the Argentinian half, then burst past Nestor Fabbri before passing for Rasmussen to score.

It was a stunning bit of football, and not surprisingly earned the Man of the Tournament award.

"We are a team of battlers, where the players play for one another and not for themselves," was how Moller Nielsen described a second major title in three years.

True, perhaps, but mixed in with a great deal of good fortune.

● ONE disappointing aspect of the tournament was the sparse crowds in the magnificent King Fahd stadium. The Saudis put this down to the fact that the tournament was held at a time of school exams. However, the King wasn't impressed by the meagre attendance for the opening ceremony and opening match – and promptly left at half-time.

● MEXICAN Jorge Campos was voted the goalkeeper of the tournament, but even he had a controversial week in Saudi. The Mexicans have signed a new kit deal which did not allow Campos to wear his own fluorescent strip. In protest, he appeared for Mexico's opening game in a black jersey that could have been worn by Lev Yashin. By Mexico's second game, Campos was back in his multi-couloured kit – a triumph for individualism over taste.

● *Results and tables start on page 54.*

Land of rising imports

J.LEAGUE teams have wasted no time in signing new foreign talent for the new season, which kicks off on March 18.

After a spate of departures by the likes of Zico, Gary Lineker and Pierre Littbarski, the race for the next big names has begun.

As in previous years, Brazil is the main source. **YOKOHAMA FLUGELS** have led the way with the signing of three Palmeiras and Brazil stalwarts, Cesar Sampaio, Zinho and Evair. In return, striker Valber Da Silva Costa, signed from Corinthians last year, will be loaned to Palmeiras.

Flugels had a bad second stage in 1994 after losing 34-year-old striker Amarilla, who claimed to be retiring from football with a strain injury. Worse was to come when it transpired that Amarilla was back scoring in Paraguay for Cerro Cora.

Having lost manager Shu Kamo to the national team Flugels embarked on a spring clean. Also released are powerful Argentinian defender Fernando Moner, and former Santos and Palmeiras midfielder Edu, who scored 12 goals in 37 league outings in 1994.

New boys **KASHIWA REYSOL** have turned to a slightly older generation of Brazilian World Cup stars. Manager Sergio already had Careca and Nelsinho on his books, both players from Sao Paulo's golden period in the mid-1980's. Now they are joined by Careca's old partner Muller. Reysol paid $1.75 million for Muller, who will receive about $1million per year.

Reysol also tried to secure the services of a fourth Sao Paulo veteran, Paulo Silas, now with San Lorenzo in Argentina. That initiative failed but, undaunted, they snapped up Valdir Benedito of Atletico Mineiro, capped four times by Brazil.

Three of the foreigners who helped Reysol to achieve J.League status have been released: Ailton Dos Santos Ferraz, Regis Angeli and Wagner August Lopes.

KASHIMA ANTLERS, who already have World Cup-winner Leonardo, have signed Bayern Munich's Brazilian defender-cum-midfielder Jorginho on a two-year contract for $2.2million. But Antlers have fired top scorer Alcindo Sartori after he demanded a massive pay rise. Reports that Bebeto is moving to Kashima Antlers appear to be unfounded, at least for the present.

JUBILO IWATA, meanwhile, have signed Brazilian World Cup captain Dunga from VfB Stuttgart. His two-year contract will start in June. Irish goalkeeping coach Gerry Peyton is moving on to join Stuart Baxter at Vissel Kobe (formerly Kawasaki Steel) in the Japan Football League.

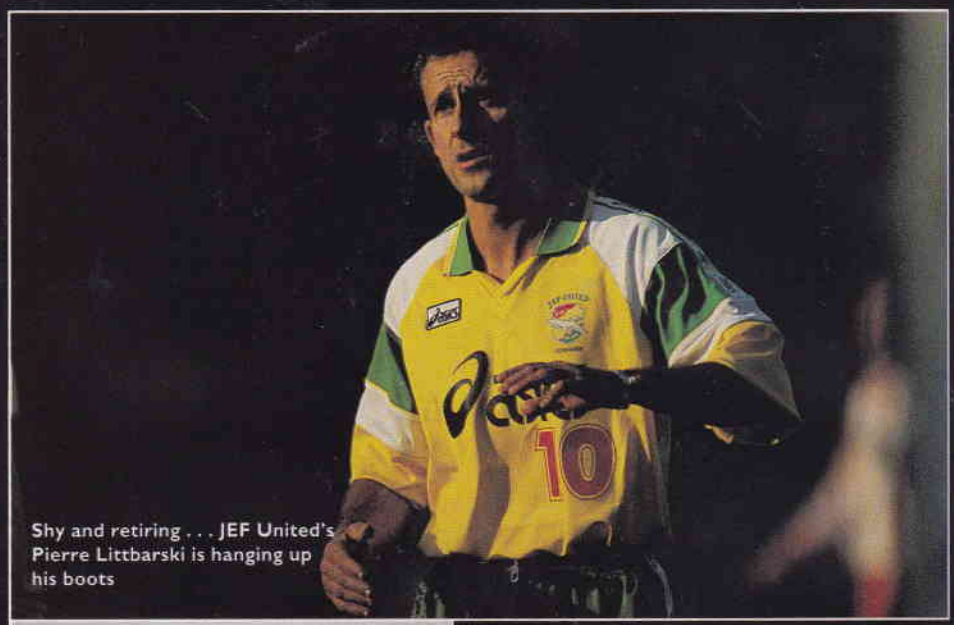
CEREZO OSAKA's one new foreign signing so far is that of Jorge Dely Valdes from Toshiba. Valdes was top scorer in the Japan Football League in both 1993 and 1994. Cerezo have released two Brazilian strikers: Carlos Moura Dourado and Marcio 'Caruaru' Soares De Lima.

URAWA RED DIAMONDS have appointed their first foreign manager, German Holger Osieck, to replace Kenzo Yokoyama, who becomes general manager. Osieck, Beckenbauer's assistant at the 1990 World Cup, was recently fired by Fenerbahce of Turkey. He is Urawa's third boss in as many seasons.

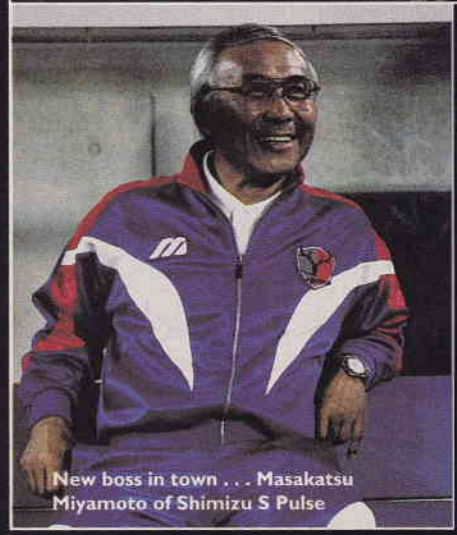
The Urawa club also turned to Germany in the form of Swede Jan Eriksson of Kaiserslautern. Eriksson has been signed on a one-year loan subject to a fitness test. Injury kept him out of last year's World Cup.

Urawa have chosen not to renew the contract of Slovakian striker Lubomir Luhovy. Luhovy fractured his pelvis just after arriving in Japan but had started to recover his form towards the end of the second stage, scoring eight goals in 16 league matches.

SHIMIZU S PULSE have appointed their first Japanese manager. Rivelinho was dismissed at the end of an unconvincing second stage in which Shimizu slipped to mid-table. His replacement is 56-year-old Masakatsu Miyamoto, formerly general manager of Kashima Antlers.



Shy and retiring . . . JEF United's Pierre Littbarski is hanging up his boots



New boss in town . . . Masakatsu Miyamoto of Shimizu S Pulse

NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT have confirmed Frenchman Arsene Wenger as new boss in place of Gordon Milne. The man who led Monaco for eight years has already moved swiftly in the transfer market.

Wenger has brought midfielder Gerald Passi from St Etienne in France and is reportedly talking with 29-year-old Franck Durix, currently at Cannes. Boro Primorac, former boss of Cannes and Valenciennes, has already been appointed as assistant manager.

Wenger went to Brazil at the end of last year and picked up Carlos Alexandre Torres from Vasco da Gama. The 28-year-old defender is the son of Carlos Alberto Torres, captain of Brazil's 1970 World Cup side.

It appears that Wenger has been given the freedom to buy who he wants. The lack of that freedom was one of Gordon Milne's biggest complaints.

Yugoslav Dragan Stojkovic is the only foreigner to stay on Grampus' books from last year. Grampus veteran Jorginho (Jorge Antonio Putinatti), starts a two-year contract as youth team coach. Yugoslav striker Dragisa Binic moves from Grampus to Tosu Futures (the former PJM Futures) in the Japan Football League, where his compatriot, the former Yugoslav national team coach Ivan Cabrinovic, has just taken over as manager.

YOKOHAMA MARINOS start the season under the new management of Jorge Solari, the man who led Saudi Arabia in the 1994 World Cup. Solari replaces Hidehiko Shimizu, who had led the club since its days as Nissan. Marinos have also appointed a general-manager, 51-year-old Takaji Mori, the former Japan national team coach.

Yasutaro Matsuki, J.League Manager of the Season in 1993 and 1994, stepped down as manager of **VERDY KAWASAKI** on January 14 to make way for Brazilian assistant manager Nelsinho. Matsuki was the last surviving manager from the big kick-off on May 15 1993. So the record stands at 20 months in office – food for thought for anyone thinking of taking a J.League managerial job.

Verdy have released two players, Ventinho and Capitao. Bismarck Barreto Faria and 1994 J.League Player of the Year Luiz Carlos Pereira are being kept on.

Wim Jansen has made his first buy as manager of **SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA**. His choice is Dutch international Pieter Huistra of Glasgow Rangers. Huistra, who has eight caps, replaces Czech Pavel Cerny, who has moved to Vissel Kobe.

Siggi Held's **GAMBA OSAKA** have also gone to Holland, picking up 1990 World Cup striker Hans Gillhaus from Vitesse Arnhem. Gillhaus previously visited Japan with PSV Eindhoven for the Toyota Cup. He was third top scorer in Holland last year with 22 goals. Gamba have also acquired Croatian midfielder Vjekoslav Skrinjar from Croatia Zagreb, but Brazilian defender Flavio and Bulgarian Kiril Metkov are going home.

BELLMARE HIRATSUKA have signed midfielder Simao from Portuguesa, but veteran Mirandinha, the Brazilian international who once played for Newcastle United, has retired and will be taking up a coaching position at Boavista in Brazil.

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA have shed most of last year's foreign stars, though Pierre Littbarski may stay on in a youth coaching position. Frank Ordenewitz, top scorer in the J.League last season with 30 goals, has been released. Both he and his wife were homesick. Of the three Czechs, Pavel Rehak moves to Toshiba and Frantisek Myslivecek to Kofu Club, both in the Japan Football League. Only Nenad Maslovar remains. Two new arrivals have been confirmed for JEF so far, New Zealand forward Wynton Rufer, from Werder Bremen, and Yugoslavian defender Goran Vasilejevic, from Lokomotiv Sofia of Bulgaria.

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIM

Trophy triumph . . . Bellmare celebrate victory in the Emperor's Cup Final

Bellmare's silverware

THE NEW YEAR in Japan has the same importance as it does in Scotland. And there was no better way to celebrate New Year's Day 1995 than under the crisp blue winter sky of Tokyo's National Stadium.

The football in this year's Emperor's Cup Final was tight, bright and full of vigour. Extra colour, if needed, was provided by the lime green shirts of Bellmare Hiratsuka and the pink of Cerezo Osaka.

Bellmare ran out 2-0 winners in a match that pitted the Japan Football League champions of 1993 and 1994 against each other. Both goals came from 24-year-old Koji Noguchi, who overcame an ankle injury to twice slip through the massed Cerezo defence.

For Bellmare victory was a fitting end to the worst and best of seasons. Bellmare finished the J.League's first stage second from bottom, then stormed back to wind up the second stage in second place, behind Verdy Kawasaki. The Emperor's Cup was a splendid consolation.

For Cerezo, the J.League's new boys from March, the Final offered an opportunity to show that they are ready and able to follow in Bellmare's footsteps.

As a Japan Football League side, Cerezo's cup run began in the final qualifying rounds with easy wins over Osaka University of Physical Education (7-0) and NTT Kansai (3-0). Then they squeezed through to the final with consecutive 1-0 wins over Komazawa University, Verdy Kawasaki and Urawa Red Diamonds, followed by the 2-1 win over Marinos in the semi-final.

Like Bellmare, Cerezo attack down both wings and alternate swiftly between defence and attack. Cerezo's attacking flair, centred on quick running by Marquinhos and Hiroaki Morishima, was best on show against Marinos. But even then the goals came from defenders Murata and Toninho. In fact, Toninho also scored the only goal that Cerezo conceded on their way to the Final, in his own net.

Bellmare reached the Final by beating Toa Kensetsu (5-1), JEF United Ichihara (2-1), Tokyo Gas (2-1) and Gamba Osaka (3-2), thereby forestalling an Osaka showdown in Tokyo.

Bellmare were at full strength for the Final, with Akira Narahashi back from suspension, but Cerezo were missing captain Satoshi Kajino. Veteran midfielder Tomoo Kudaka took over the captain's armband.

Bellmare attacked from the start, with Betinho, Noguchi and Almir constantly looking dangerous, while Cerezo took the field with a cautious 3-5-2 formation that effectively gave them eight defenders. Yet the speed of the Cerezo counter-attack never permitted a dull moment.

The best chances of the first half fell to Betinho and Taku Watanabe of Bellmare, but Marquinhos also sent a free-kick curling wickedly close to the Bellmare bar. A good cross by Katsuo Kanda nearly let Cerezo's Morishima through to score.

Noguchi's first goal came just after the break. A fast ball down the right from Narahashi found Almir, who quickly laid the pass inside for Noguchi to slip the ball under keeper Jiro Takeda.

Cerezo never gave up and a ferocious shot from Kanda sailed just wide in the 60th minute.

But Bellmare stayed in control. With four minutes left, as Cerezo threw everyone forward, a clearance found Noguchi racing across the half-way line on his own. He took it all the way, chipping neatly over Takeda to finish.

"We did our best", said Cerezo wingback Katsuo Kanda.

"So there is nothing to be sad about. This match gave us everything: confidence, topics and targets for the future."

Bellmare boss Mitsuru Komaeda sounded a similar note. "The title will give us confidence", he said. "But," observed assistant manager Nicanor, "our soccer is not finished yet. The next year is still going to be hard."

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIMA

THE EMPEROR'S CUP . . . THE STORY SO FAR

THE EMPEROR'S CUP began as the FA Cup in 1921. The tournament was renamed as the Emperor's Cup after the war. It was dominated by university clubs until 1960, when Furukawa became the first company team to lift the trophy. The company teams correspond to current teams as follows: Furukawa (JEF United Ichihara), Toyo Kogyo (later Mazda, now Sanfrecce Hiroshima), Mitsubishi (Urawa Red Diamonds), Yanmar (Cerezo Osaka), Hitachi (Kashiwa Reysol), Fujita (Bellmare Hiratsuka), Yomiuri (Verdy Kawasaki), Yamaha (Jubilo Iwata), Nissan (Yokohama Marinos), Mazda (Sanfrecce Hiroshima), Matsushita (Gamba Osaka).

Year	Winner	Runner-up
1960	Furukawa 4	Keio BRB 0
1961	Furukawa 3	Chuo University 2
1962	Chuo Univ 2	Furukawa 1
1963	Waseda Univ 3	Hitachi 0
1965 *(shared)*	Furukawa 0	Hachiman Steel 0
1966	Toyo Kogyo 3	Hachiman Steel 2
1967	Waseda Univ 3	Toyo Kogyo 2
1968 *(Jan)*	Toyo Kogyo 1	Mitsubishi 0
1968 *(Dec)*	Yanmar 1	Mitsubishi 0
1969	Toyo Kogyo 4	Rikkyo Univ 1
1970	Yanmar 2	Toyo Kogyo 1
1971	Mitsubishi 3	Yanmar 1
1972	Hitachi 2	Yanmar 1
1973	Mitsubishi 2	Hitachi 1
1974	Yanmar 2	Eidai 1
1975	Hitachi 2	Fujita 0
1976	Furukawa 4	Yanmar 1
1977	Fujita 4	Yanmar 1
1978	Mitsubishi 1	Toyo Kogyo 0
1979	Fujita 2	Mitsubishi 1
1980	Mitsubishi 1	Tanabe Seiyaku 0
1981	NKK 2	Yomiuri 0
1982	Yamaha 1	Fukita 0
1983	Nissan 2	Yanmar 0
1984	Yomiuri 2	Furukawa 0
1985	Nissan 2	Fujita 0
1986	Yomiuri 2	NKK 1
1987	Yomiuri 2	Mazda 0
1988	Nissan 3	Fujita 1
1989	Nissan 3	Yamaha 2
1990	Matsushita 0	Nissan *(pens 4-3)* 0
1991	Nissan 4	Yomiuri 1
1992	Nissan 2	Yomiuri 1
1993	Flugels 6	Kashima Antlers 2
1994	Bellmare 2	Cerezo Osaka 0

Ramos returns

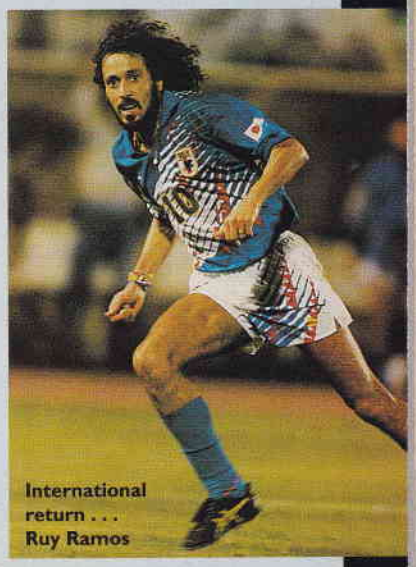
ONE OF THE SURPRISES of the Intercontinental Cup in Saudi Arabia was the return of 37-year-old Ruy Ramos to international action.

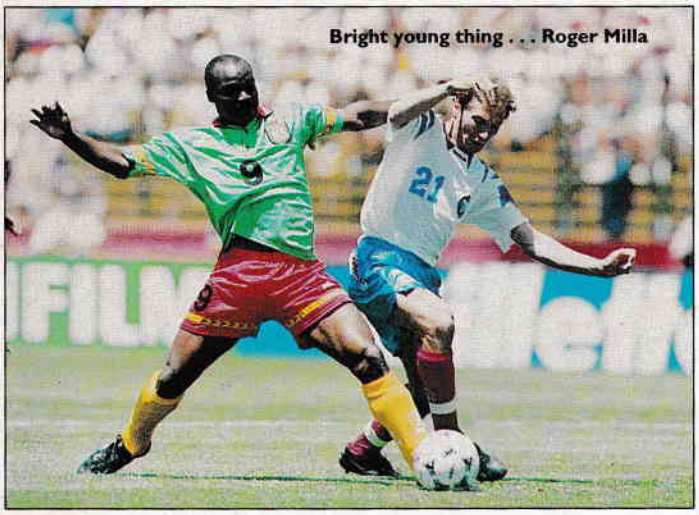
Ramos announced his retirement from the national side after Hans Ooft's team crashed out of the World Cup qualifiers in Qatar. Falcao had urged him to recant but to no avail, and his presence was sorely missed at the Asian Games.

But Ramos answered the call of new manager Shu Kamo, explaining that he had always wanted to play under Kamo, the most tactical of the Japanese coaches.

But the story didn't have a happy ending. Ramos pulled a muscle in the first three minutes of the opening match with Nigeria. He struggled on for half of the match before being substituted. Ramos missed the Argentina game and looks doubtful for the Dynasty Cup in Hong Kong in February, when Japan take on Hong Kong, South Korea and China.

As for Japan, they were drubbed 3-0 by Nigeria and 5-1 by Argentina and looked far from the side of two years ago.


International return . . . Ruy Ramos


Bright young thing . . . Roger Milla

INDONESIA

VETERAN MILLA SIGNS UP

CAMEROON'S king of the road, Roger Milla, is on the move again. The veteran striker has signed a one-year deal with Indonesian club Pelita Jaya. Milla will reportedly be earning $4,900 a month.

Milla, officially 42 but believed to be older, made history when he became the oldest player to score in the World Cup. He said he was happy in Jakarta: "For me, money is not my first concern. I'm glad because I get appreciation in Jakarta. If I'm looking for money, I will play in Japan."

Pelita Jaya have also approached two other Cameroonian World Cup stars, Emile Mbouh-Mbouh and Emmanuel Maboang Kessack, with a view to signing them.

Pelita lie third in the Western Group Division, which is led by Semen Padang. Assyabaab SGS head the Eastern Group.

ZULFIRMAN

ASIAN CUP-WINNERS CUP

DEFENDER Ippie Watanabe scored twice as Yokohama Flugels of Japan beat Al Shaab of the United Arab Emirates 2-1 to take the Asian Cup-winners Cup.

The match was played at a furious pace before Watanabe put the Japanese side ahead in the 37th minute. Al-Shaab's Mali striker Makan Kita forced extra time when he scored from Adnan Talyani's free-kick.

But 22-year-old Watanabe won the game when he scored in the first period of extra time.

Earlier, in the third place play-off, Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia beat Thailand's Telephone Organization 4-1 on penalties after the match had ended 1-1.

HONG KONG

GOLDEN, newcomers to the top flight, went to the top of the table after beating champions Eastern 1-0.

The club, formerly known as Voicelink, are coached by Carlton Fairweather (ex-Wimbledon) and have conceded just six goals in eight games.

Eastern, who have taken over from South China as Hong Kong's most successful club in recent seasons, lost their grip on the Challenge Shield with a 4-3 semi-final defeat at the hands of rejuvenated Rangers.

In the final Rangers will meet Happy Valley, who beat South China in a penalty shoot-out after a goalless 120 minutes.

JORDAN

CHAMPIONS Al Faysali appear to have relinquished their title as Al Hussein, Al Wahadat and Al Ramtha pull away at the top.

Despite beating Al Jazira 2-0, Al Faysali remain six points behind leaders Al Hussein after 15 of the 22 matches. Two goals from Aref Hussein enabled Al Hussein to win 3-2 away to Al Jil, their 12th victory.

Al Ramtha's Mouaffaq Abu Hodeib is top scorer with 12 goals.

KUWAIT

A RECORD 27 goals were scored in one round of seven matches during the third week of the Kuwait League.

On the negative side, 22 yellow cards and four red were shown on the same day.

Ahmed Abdulkarim scored four times in Al Jahra's 7-1 defeat of Suleibkhat.

MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE completed a League and Cup double by thrashing Pahang 4-0 in the Malaysia Cup Final in front of a capacity 81,000 crowd in Kuala Lumpur.

The Lions, roared on by 50,000 Singaporeans who had crossed into Malaysia, coasted home with a hat-trick from their Australian striker, Abbas Saad, and one from skipper Fandi Ahmad. Saad scored twice in the first half and completed his hat-trick in the 66th minute. Saad, who is of Lebanese extraction, will stay with Singapore for a further two seasons.

SAUDI ARABIA

WORLD CUP midfielder Fuad Anwar Amin is the 1994 Arabian Player of the Year.

Amin, who plays for Shabab of Riyadh, won the 1994 Arab Ballon D'Or, awarded annually by Lebanese magazine *Al Watan Al-Riyadi*.

Al Riyadh jumped to the top of the table with a 4-2 victory over Al Raed. They lead Al Ittifaq by two points after seven rounds of fixtures. Champions Al Nasr, coached by Frenchman Henri Michel, are third on 13 points with a game in hand.

SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA'S World Cup libero, Hong Myung-bo, has turned down a move to Japan.

The 26-year-old Hong of Posco Atoms, who played for Korea in the 1990 and 1994 World Cups, confirmed that he had received an offer from a J.League club, but did not identify them.

"Financially I would have gained something but I am more concerned about improving as a player," he said. "This is why I would like the chance to play in Europe and not in Japan."

JEREMY WALKER

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

POLISH-BORN coach Anton Piechniczek has lost his job as national coach, despite his better-than-average record.

In his two years the national team won 18 matches, drew 10 and lost 10, scoring 48 goals and conceding only 28.

But they failed on the big occasions, going out of the World Cup '94 qualifyers to Japan, and losing to Kuwait in the quarter-final of the Asian Games last October.

Piechniczek coached his native country in the 1982 and 1986 World Cup Finals, and went to the UAE in succession to such top names as Don Revie, Carlos Alberto Parreira, Mario Zagalo and Valeri Lobanovski.

ARAB CHAMPIONS CUP

AL HILAL of Riyadh won the 10th Arab Champions Cup for the first time in their history.

In an all-Saudi Final, Al Hilal, coached by 1982 Brazil World Cup defender, Oscar, defeated rivals Al Ittihad of Jeddah, coached by Ian Porterfield, 4-3 on penalties, after the match had ended goalless after extra time.

World Cup striker, Sami Al-Jaber, netted twice in Al Hilal's 4-1 thrashing of Club Bizerte in the semi-final. His tally of seven goals made him the tournament's top scorer.

In the other semi-final Al Ittihad won 3-1 against JS Kabylie of Tunisia in the most thrilling encounter of the competition. The Africans took the lead four minutes from time, thanks to playmaker Adlan Hajj, only to be cancelled out by a glancing header from Ahmed Jamil Madani in the dying moments, to force extra time. Madani headed another goal in the 101st minute, and forward Ismail Hekmi sealed his side's victory in the 113th minute.

OMAN

AL OUROUBA'S Senegalese forward, Jassam Engay, scored at least once in all of the first four matches of the season to shoot his club into a five-point lead.

Al Ahly, Al Khaboura and Al Suwaiq, who were all promoted from the Second Division last season, occupied the next three places. Oman SC, runners-up in the 1993 Asian Cup, were bottom after three draws and a defeat.

MOHAMED CHBARO

INDIA

EAST BENGAL won the Rovers Cup for the 10th time by beating Air India 2-1 at the Cooperage ground in Bombay.

Goals by Majhi and Manoharan put East Bengal in command, and Air India could manage only a last-minute reply from 19-year-old Mosa.

The semi-finals had been played at the same ground three days earlier. Both took place on the same day, and tragedy was narrowly averted when two temporary stands collapsed, injuring 30 people

East Bengal also went on to win the Indian FA Shield, in its centenary year, for the 22nd time.

Again Mohun Bagan – playing in Calcutta, their home city – were favourites, but after topping their group in the quarter-final stage, two points ahead of East Bengal, and beating BN Railway 5-0 in the semi-final, they were defeated 2-1 in the final.

G C DAS

ASIAN FOOTBALL

Official Sponsors – Supporting Asian

Diary

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

BRAZIL: Barcelona striker Romario suffers a cut above the eye which needs five stitches after he is hit by a flying beer can during a New Year beach party in Rio.
GUINEA-BISSAU: The federation withdraws from the African Nations Cup qualifying tournament – the 10th country to do so. Their results so far will be expunged from the tournament record.

MONDAY, JANUARY 2

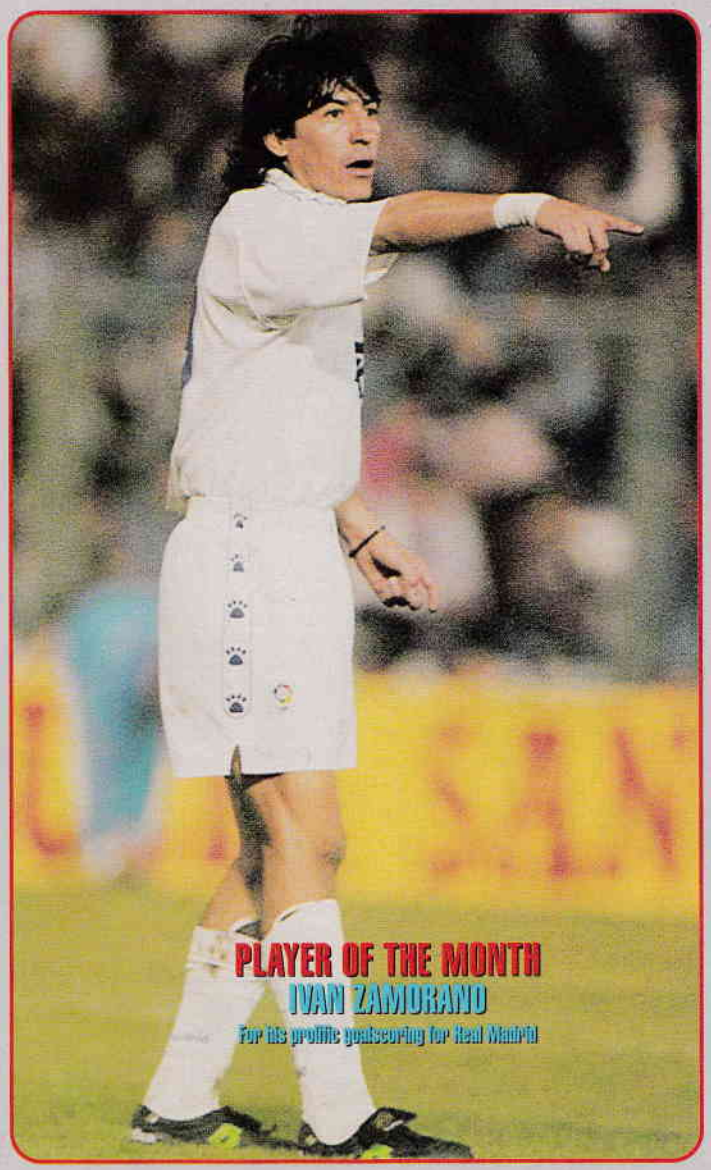
ENGLAND: The players union says it intends to Sunday newspapers and a business magazine over articles about the salary of chief executive Gordon Taylor.
GERMANY: Norrkoping 27-year-old Sweden striker, Niklas Kindvall, is sold to Hamburg. He is the son of 1960s star Ove Kindvall and was top scorer in Sweden's top division last season.
SPAIN: Hristo Stoichkov is reported in Italy as saying his New Year wishes include playing in Italy . . . Barcelona team-mate Romario is named Sportsman of the Year by French daily *L'Equipe* ahead of cycling's hour record-holder Tony Rominger of Switzerland and swimmer Alexander Popov of Russia.
TURKEY: Tomislav Ivic takes over as coach of Fenerbahce after the dismissal of German coach Holger Osieck.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3

BRAZIL: Pele is sworn in as Sports Minister and says his priorities will be to support campaigns to bring the 2004 Olympic Games to Rio de Janeiro and the 2006 World Cup finals to Brazil as well as to get the kids off the streets. He also promises to act against domestic soccer corruption.
ENGLAND: Hampshire police hint it will be at least another month before any decision is made on whether to pursue criminal charges against Bruce Grobbelaar . . . Newcastle give trials to Finnish internationals Sami Hyypia and Junis Kolkka from MyPa.
FRANCE: National team goalkeeper Bernard Lama is suspended for two matches by Paris Saint-Germain for returning late from his New Year holiday in Guyana . . . Paris weekly *France Football* presents visiting Diego Maradona with a special award to honour his career achievements. Maradona, who flew via Cuba and thus violated a court sentence and bail conditions by leaving Argentina without notifying officials, says he has no intention of resuming his playing career once his dope-test ban has expired.
ITALY: Ascoli reach the final of the Anglo-Italian Cup in March after a dramatic semi-final win on away goals against Ancona. Ascoli, beaten 1-0 at home, win the second leg 2-1 away after extra time . . . Juventus confirm that injuries will deprive them of Roberto Baggio and Jurgen Kohler against Parma in the weekend's top-of-the-table game while Parma fear striker Faustino Asprilla may not be back from a holiday in Colombia after his arrest for being found in a bar in possession of two firearms . . . Fiorentina deny reports that they have agreed to sell controversial German midfielder Stefan Effenberg, currently on loan to Borussia Monchengladbach.
POLAND: The European Championship qualifier between Poland and Israel, originally scheduled for April 26, will be played a day earlier because April 27 is commemorated in Israel as Holocaust Day.
SCOTLAND: Rangers' Dane Brian Laudrup is named Player of the Month for the second time this season.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

EGYPT: Dutchman Nol de Reuter quits as national manager of Egypt rather than risk travelling to Algeria for the imminent African Nations qualifier. De Reuter is reported to have acted on the advice of the Dutch Embassy.
FRANCE: The Furiani stadium disaster trial opens in Bastia, Corsica, under heavy security guard after the murder on December 26 of Jean-Francois Filippi, president of the Bastia club at the time of the tragedy when 17 fans were killed and 2,000 injured before a French cup semi-final between Bastia and Marseille.
ITALY: Ruud Gullit complains that soccer is becoming more commercial all the time at the expense of the sport. He says the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles were the turning point, adding: "That's when FIFA and UEFA understood, and the final step they took was to create the Champions League."
SAUDI ARABIA: FIFA says it intends taking over control of the Intercontinental Cup, conceived by Saudi Arabia, from 1997.
SPAIN: Real Madrid confirm that they expect ticket receipts of £850,000, a Spanish league record, for the weekend game against Barca.



THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

ITALY: Fiorentina say they have not yet decided whether they would sell controversial German midfielder Stefan Effenberg, although he has already said the club want to make his move to Borussia Monchengladbach permanent . . . Parma say Faustino Asprilla will not have to return home for questioning over an incident in which he was allegedly found brandishing two pistols in a bar.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

ACTION: In the opening exchanges of the Intercontinental Cup in Riyadh, Nigeria beat Japan 3-0 and hosts Saudi Arabia lose 2-0 to Mexico.
FRANCE: FIFA referee Alain Sars is warned of disciplinary action after he is quoted in a newspaper as describing Nantes coach Jean-Claude Suaudeau as "the worst trainer I know, a world champion in making all kinds of insults" . . . Franck Sauzee is suspended by his own club, Strasbourg, for one game after throwing the ball at coach Daniel Jeandupeux during Tuesday's shock 2-0 League Cup defeat by second division Perpignan.
GERMANY: Leeds United agree terms with Eintracht Frankfurt for the transfer of striker Anthony Yeboah but the Ghanaian has until Monday to consider Leeds's pay offer.
ITALY: New confusion over Faustino Asprilla as his agent says he will, after all, travel to Colombia next week to answer charges of possessing two unregistered weapons.
ROMANIA: Rapid Bucharest follow the example of Lazio and ask UEFA to expel Eintracht Frankfurt from the UEFA Cup quarter-finals for fielding too many foreign players in a second round match. Rapid vice-president Dan Matei says: "Eintracht illegally fielded, against our team, four foreign players: Ghanaian Anthony Yeboah, Nigerian Augustine Okocha, Pole Jan Furtok and Yugoslav Slobodan Komljenovic."
SPAIN: Flamengo president Kleber Leite holds long meetings with Barcelona directors to discuss the possible shock transfer home of Romario, who claims he is homesick in Spain and says he will fund part of the transfer fee.
UKRAINE: Former Kiev Dynamo midfielder Anatoly Konkov is named Ukraine's new national coach in succession to caretaker Josif Szabo, who resigned at the end of last year after just three months in the job which he held in addition to his post with Kiev.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

ACTION: In the African Nations qualifiers, Senegal and Tunisia draw 0-0, Sierra Leone beat Gambia 2-0 and Sudan beat Uganda 3-1 . . . Patrice Loko scores a first-half hat-trick to send Nantes seven points clear at the top of the French league after beating Lille 3-0 . . . Sporting go back to the top of the Portuguese league for one day after winning 2-1 away to promoted Chaves . . . Real Madrid thrash Barcelona 5-0 in Spain with a hat-trick from Ivan Zamorano.
GERMANY: Bulgaria striker Emil Kostadinov joins Bayern Munich on loan from Spanish side Deportivo La Coruna until the end of the season.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

ACTION: In the African qualifiers, Algeria win 1-0 against Egypt in their fraught match in Algiers; Cameroon are held 0-0 by Malawi; Congo beat Niger 3-1; Ethiopia beat Tanzania 1-0; Togo draw 0-0 at home to Mauritania; and Zaire beat Lesotho 3-0 . . . In the Intercontinental Cup in Riyadh, Argentina thrash Japan 5-1 and Saudi Arabia lose again, this time 2-0 to Denmark . . . Fabrizio Ravanelli scores twice in four minutes to help Juventus knock Parma off the top of Italy's Serie A, with a 3-1 away victory . . . Porto beat Salgueiros 5-2 to reclaim the lead in the Portugal thanks to two goals from Domingos Oliveira . . . Real Madrid find themselves two points clear at the top of the Spanish league after closest pursuers Real Zaragoza lose 3-0 away to promoted Compostela.

MONDAY, JANUARY 9

ACTION: Uruguay beat a San Jose province side 6-1 in a warm-up for the friendly international against Spain . . . Roda beat Brondby 4-2 in the opening match of the Maspalomas tournament.
ARGENTINA: Boca Juniors open negotiations to bring home Diego Latorre from Tenerife.
FRANCE; George Weah of Paris Saint-Germain is voted African Footballer of the Year by *France Football* . . . the federation confirms more problems for Marseille stemming from the scandal match with Nancy – substitutes Ferrer and Germain played despite being under suspension.
GERMANY: Stuttgart midfielder Dunga says he, too, wants to return to play in Brazil.
SPAIN: Barcelona and Flamengo and Romario agree all the details of the player's shock transfer home. Barcelona say all that is needed is bank notification that the £3.3million fee has been paid in. Barcelona buy midfielder Jose Mari from Osasuna, promote goalkeeper Angoy from the Barcelona B nursery squad and confirm the arrival of the Russian midfielder Korneyev . . . challenger

Florentino Perez claims 3,000 more votes of recommendation than incumbent Ramon Mendoza in the 'primaries' held ahead of the Real Madrid presidential election.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

ACTION: Denmark and Argentina qualify for the Intercontinental Cup final. Denmark beat Mexico on penalties after a 1-1 draw, Argentina top their group after drawing 0-0 with Nigeria.
COLOMBIA: Rene Higuita is recalled to the national squad.
ENGLAND: Manchester United agree a domestic record fee of £7million for Newcastle United top scorer Andy Cole.
SWITZERLAND: More turbulent times at FIFA as president Havelange sacks press chief Guido Tognoni and competitions department head Miguel Galan.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona claims that Claudio Caniggia will return from Benfica to join him at Racing.
FRANCE: Nantes win the match of the season, thrashing Paris Saint-Germain 3-0 in the Parc des Princes.
ITALY: Milan beat Reggiana 2-1 in a game postponed from before Christmas . . . Milan officials say Marco Van Basten may be ready to play again in mid-February . . . Inter insist Dennis Bergkamp is not for sale.
PORTUGAL: Sporting offer star midfielder Luis Figo a new three-year contract to try to prevent him leaving for Italy.
SPAIN: Espanol crash 5-3 at home to Palomas in the cup, three players are sent off from each team (including Espanol's Florin Raducioiu) and Espanol finish with seven men because another is injured . . . La Coruna claim to have completed the signing of Marcio Amoroso from Guarani but the Brazilians say the fee remains to be settled . . . Ilie Dumitrescu scores his first goal for Sevilla against Leonesa in the cup . . . Hristo Stoichkov is banned for two games for his weekend sending-off against Real Madrid.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12

ACTION: Sturm Graz beat Brondby 4-2 in the third place match at Maspalomas.
ARGENTINA: Maradona sacks two Racing players for failing to return on time from holidays for training.
BRAZIL: Sao Paulo loan Cafu to Zaragoza for the rest of the Spanish season . . . Sports Minister Pele calls for a tax inquiry into all state federations, their clubs and officials.
COLOMBIA: Parma's Faustino Asprilla is cleared by a judge in Tulua of any offence in the pistols affair.
CYPRUS: The federation hires Romanian referees as strike-breakers so the championship can continue despite a boycott by domestic officials.
ITALY: Further arrests are ordered in the ongoing inquiry involving connections between Napoli, cocaine dealing and the Naples camorra. Among warrants issued is one for Guillermo Coppola, former personal manager of Diego Maradona. Leaks from the inquiry report provide further allegations that Napoli 'threw' the 1988 championship because the camorra feared massive betting losses. Cocaine parties among players and camorra members are also reported.
SPAIN: Real Madrid doctors say Fernando Redondo will be back after his latest injury in three weeks time . . . Barcelona extend Johan Cruyff's contract by a further year to the summer of 1997 . . . Sevilla report an extra £50,000 of season ticket sales following the arrival of Ilie Dumitrescu . . . Real Madrid B nursery team players Dani and Paco Sanz, reported for failing dope tests after a game against Osasuna, say they had taken only vitamin tablets prescribed by the team doctor.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

ACTION: Denmark win the Intercontinental Cup, beating Argentina 2-0 in the final. Mexico beat Nigeria on penalties in the third place play-off after a 1-1 draw . . . Dutch league leaders Roda beat IFK Gothenburg 2-0 in the final of the Maspalomas tournament.
MEXICO: Brazilian veteran Dirceu begins a comeback at 42 in the second division with Venados of Yucatan.
SPAIN: Romario's departure from Barcelona to Flamengo is confirmed and he flies out via Madrid. Final financial settlement is £3million now and a further £3million if Flamengo want to keep him in two years' time. Barcelona retain all rights over any future transfers. He is expected to make his Flamengo debut against Uruguay . . . Gijon sign Perico Perez from Independiente . . . Nigerian World Cup defender Austin Eguavoen joins second division Orense.
SWITZERLAND: UEFA's disciplinary commission orders Macedonia to play their next two European qualifiers behind closed doors as punishment for the missiles thrown at the end of the game against Cyprus, one of which struck a match official.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

ACTION: Porto mark the halfway point in the Portuguese championship by keeping just ahead of Sporting at the top thanks to a hard-earned 2-0 win at Tirsense . . . in Spain a goalless draw between Deportivo Coruna and Real Madrid reinforces Madrid's three-point advantage at the top.
BRAZIL: Thousands of fans line the streets of Rio to welcome Romario home from Barcelona after his transfer to Flamengo.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

ACTION: Champions Paris Saint-Germain and league leaders Nantes survive the first round of the French cup . . . in Holland, Feyenoord secure a dramatic 5-4 victory over lowly Dordrecht . . . three police officers are injured by a firecracker launched in the stands as Juventus beat Roma, controversially, by 3-0 in a game which sees three players sent off . . . Spanish champions Barcelona overpower bottom club Logrones 3-0 to edge a point closer to leaders Real Madrid.
BRAZIL: Romario is quickly into controversy, squabbling with a photographer outside his hotel in the early morning as he prepares to drive off with a friend.
ITALY: Milan, interested in Paris Saint-Germain's George Wean, say they may go to law to prove the Liberian-born striker is a French citizen because they already have their quota of two non-EU players in Boban and Savicevic.
SWITZERLAND: Veteran midfielder Thomas Bickel is transferred from Grasshopper to Vissel Kobe, a Japanese second division club.

MONDAY, JANUARY 16

ACTION: Australia draw 1-1 with South Korea in Canberra in a four-nations under-23 tournament.
BELGIUM: Former international midfielder Wilfried Van Moer is appointed new assistant to national coach Paul Van Himst.
ENGLAND: Scotland veteran Gordon Strachan retires three weeks short of his 38th birthday after back injury problems.
ROMANIA: Dinamo Bucharest appoint a new president and trainer. Cornel Dinu succeeds Vasile Anghei as president and Remus Vlad replaces Ion Moldovan as trainer following last week's resignations.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17

CYPRUS: Local referees end their one-week strike and sack their own executive committee after the boycott was broken when the federation imported nine Israeli and 12 Czech officials.
UNITED STATES: Major League Soccer's inaugural 1996 season may see further laws experiment. President Alan Rothenberg says: "We want entertaining, offensive oriented, not overly defensive play while still respecting the intergrity of the game." Rule modifications requested in a written petition to the USSF and FIFA are giving the option of a kick-in or throw-in when the ball goes out of play and tougher penalties for players who encroach at free kicks.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

ACTION: Holland lose 1-0 to France in Utrecht . . . Spain are held 2-2 by Uruguay in La Coruna.
AUSTRALIA: A parliamentary report following an inquiry into corruption in domestic soccer recommends the dismissal of national coach Eddie Thomson, the removal of one senior official and the reference of two club coaches to police for possible prosecution.
BRAZIL: Brazil defender Branco joins Flamengo from Corinthians less than a week after the club recruited his World Cup-winning team-mate Romario.

Leeds man . . . Ghanaian striker Tony Yeboah

SWITZERLAND: FIFA name Roberto Baggio of Italy, Brazilian Romario and Bulgarian Hristo Stoichkov as finalists for the 1994 FIFA world player of the year award.
VIETNAM: An American sports promoter says he wants to arrange a first-ever senior international between Vietnam and the US, probably to be played in Hanoi in October.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

ENGLAND: Ghanaian striker Anthony Yeboah is granted a work permit by the Department of Employment to complete his £3.4million transfer from Eintracht Frankfurt to Leeds.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain skipper Alain Roche offers to act as mediator in a row between David Ginola and coach Luis Fernandez. Ginola attacked Fernandez in press interviews for dropping him after the crucial league defeat by Nantes.
GERMANY: Bayern coach Giovanni Trapattoni confirms speculation that he considering returning to Italy at the season's end. He says: "If I were five years younger I would stay."
ITALY: League leaders Juventus say they hope to sign Portuguese international Luis Figo from Sporting Lisbon.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

ACTION: Yokohama Flugels score three times in 10 minutes in the second half in Sharjah to beat Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) 4-2 to reach the final of the Asian Cup-winners Cup. They will play Al-Shaab of the United Arab Emirates, who beat Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad on penalties 5-4 after a 1-1 draw in extra time . . . Tunisian club Esperance beat Daring Club Motema Pembe of Zaire 3-0 to win the African Supercup.
BULGARIA: Dimitar Penev, who led Bulgaria to the 1994 World Cup semi-finals, will continue as national coach for another two years. His contract expired at the end of December.
FRANCE: Metz will appeal against a league decision to award their opponents Lyon victory after their match was abandoned because of snow earlier in the month. Lyon were leading the match 2-1 when the referee stopped play after 63 minutes because the line markings on the pitch were no longer visible. The League say the score stands because Metz failed to tell the referee they had equipment available to clear the lines.
SPAIN: Valencia and ex-Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira says the Spanish league is now the best in the world.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

ACTION: Tanzania beat Algeria 2-1 in an African Nations Cup qualifier; Uganda draw 0-0 with Egypt . . . Lyon moved into second place ahead of Paris Saint-Germain in France after beating Cannes 3-1 . . . Porto go one point clear in Portugal after winning 4-1 away to Braga while Sporting struggle to draw 1-1 at home against Farense.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

ACTION: Top result in the day's African Nations qualifiers is Zimbabwe's 4-1 thrashing of Cameroon in Harare . . . Japan's Yokohama Flugels beat the UAE's Al-Shaab 2-1 to win the Asian Cup-winners Cup Final in Sharjah . . . a spectacular headed goal by Eric Cantona nine minutes from the end gives champions Manchester United a 1-0 victory over leader Blackburn . . . Panathinaikos beat Larissa 2-0 to open up a 10-point lead in Greece . . . a late penalty by Patrick Kluivert puts Ajax Amsterdam back on top in Holland as they beat PSV Eindhoven 1-0 . . . Juventus stay top in Italy despite crashing 3-0 away to Cagliari . . . Real Madrid maintain their command in Spain, Raul and Hierro scoring twice each in a 4-0 win over Celta.
ENGLAND: Former Denmark and Luton striker Lars Elstrup is the latest player implicated in bung allegations concerning his two transfers to and from Odense in 1989 and 1992.
ITALY: Fiorentina say they are determined to retain unsettled German midfielder Stefan Effenberg, currently playing on loan in Germany with Borussia Monchengladbach.

MONDAY, JANUARY 23

BRAZIL: Jorge Emiliano dos Santos, the referee better known by his nickname of Margardia, dies aged 40 of an AIDS-related disease . . . Romario donates his World Cup-winning shirt to an auction to help raise funds to assist earthquake victims in Japan.

Diary

FRANCE: Bordeaux fine defender Didier Senac £5,000 for stamping on Polish player Piotr Swierczewski and breaking his nose during a mass brawl at the weekend game against Saint-Etienne. The incident had been captured by TV but not by the referee. Swierczewski had been shown a red card for punching Bordeaux midfielder Zinedine Zidane on the back of the head, the incident which sparked the violence . . . the prosecution in the Furiani stadium disaster trial in Corsica demands maximum two-year prison terms for the builder and safety inspector of the temporary grandstand which collapsed in May 1992, killing 17 spectators and injuring more than 1,900.

GERMANY: Bayern Munich striker Jean-Pierre Papin returns to Marseille for a new operation to cure a troublesome knee injury. Papin says he hopes to be fit for the Bundesliga restart in mid-February.

NEW ZEALAND: Linda Black makes history when she becomes the first woman to referee a men's soccer international. Black, 36, takes charge of New Zealand's 2-1 win over the Danish Olympic squad at Newtown Park, Wellington.

SPAIN: Real Madrid's Argentine midfielder Fernando Redondo trains for the first time since straining knee ligaments six weeks ago.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA deplores the murder in Algeria of FA president Rachid Haraigue by fundamentalist extremists as an attack on the fundamental principles of sport.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

BRAZIL: Botafogo say they have been given the go-ahead by sponsor Pepsi-Cola to buy three World Cup players and have set their sights on La Coruna striker Bebeto.

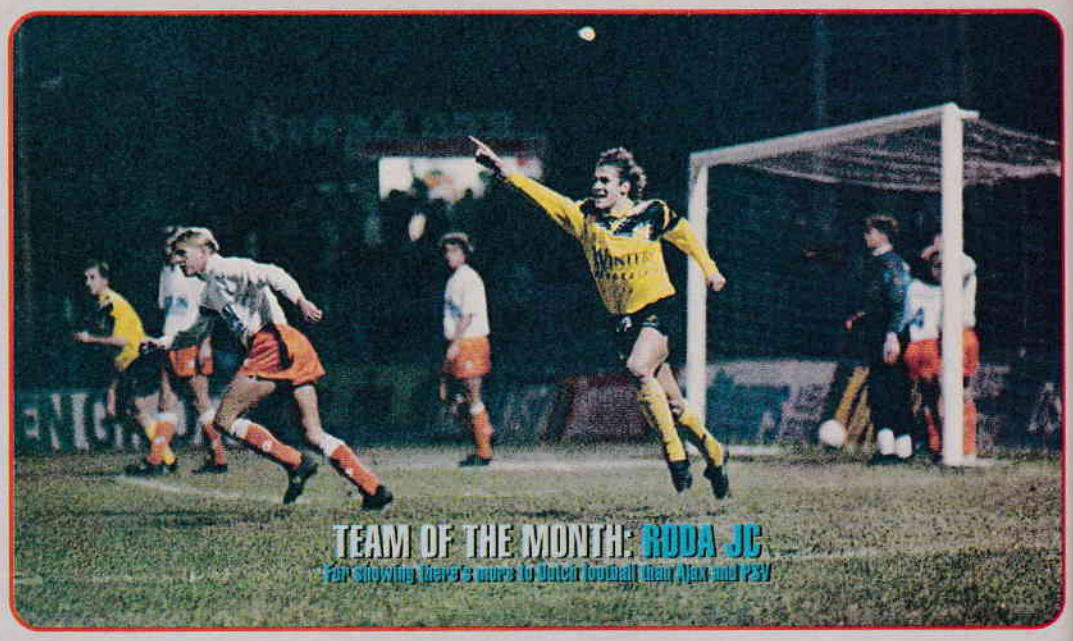
FRANCE: Fernand Arnaud, president of the Marseille city commercial courts, says Olymnpique Marseille are almost certain to go into receivership soon with debts of between £20 and £25million. He says further claims of up to a further £6million are expected. A

Botafogo target . . . Bebeto

meeting between league officials, Marseille municipal authorities and financial inspectors is set for Paris at the beginning of February to study the position.

GERMANY: Roland Wohlfarth is suspended for four weeks by the German federation after failing a dope test at an indoor tournament in Leipzig in January. Wohlfarth, of Bochum, was tested positive for appetite enhancer called Recatol which contains the banned stimulant Norephedrin. Wohlfarth admits to having taken the medication but denies he knew it contained a banned stimulant.

ITALY: Juventus claim first option to buy the Portuguese midfielder Luis Figo from Sporting of Lisbon.



ZIMBABWE: Cameroon's national squad are stranded without food and accommodation in Zimbabwe after their African Nations Cup qualifier, after running out of funds for the flight home.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

AUSTRIA: Former international and national team boss Erich Hof dies, aged 58.

CAMEROON: Tonnerre Yaounde accuse veteran striker Roger Milla of having mislead them over his transfer to Indonesian side Pelita Jaya. Tonnerre say Milla told them he was going to Indonesia as a coach, not as a player and obtained a release letter to that effect.

ENGLAND: Eric Cantona is banned by Manchester United for the rest of the season after assaulting an abusive fan with a two-footed, kung-fu style tackle after being sent off in United's league game at Crystal Palace. Cantona is charged by the FA with bringing the game into disrepute. The French federation strips him of the France captaincy.

FRANCE: Marseille vice-president Jean-Louis Levreau is banned for one year by the French league for criticising the referee of the second division match against Nancy, which was halted before the end after clashes between police and supporters.

GERMANY: Double trouble for Bayern. First, Giovanni Trapattoni confirms media speculation that he intends to leave Bayern Munich and return to Italy after just one season in Germany. Then Lothar Matthaus is ruled out for probably the rest of the season after tearing his left achilles tendon in a friendly against Arminia Bielefeld.

NIGERIA: Local authorities say the country is ready to stage the World Youth Cup, despite continuing criticism and doubts

SPAIN: Barcelona are fined £1,400 by the Catalan regional government after a club official killed a hare which ran across the pitch during the match against Atletico Madrid on March 12 last year.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA's executive committee decides that the European Cup final on May 24 will be staged in Vienna's Ernst Happel Stadium and the May 10 Cup-winners Cup final in the Parc des Princes in Paris . . . FIFA confirms Saudi Arabian documentation that veteran forward Majed Abdullah, with 147 internationals, has overtaken former England goalkeeper Peter Shilton as the world's most-capped player.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

ENGLAND: Eric Cantona is charged by the FA with misconduct bringing the game into disrepute.

FRANCE: Bordeaux defender Didier Senac is banned until the end of March by the French federation for kicking and trampling on an opponent. Two other Bordeaux players who joined in the melee, Christophe Dugarry and Bixente Lizarazu, are suspended for four and three matches respectively.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

BRAZIL: Romario makes made a disappointing return to South American football, being substituted after 75 minutes of Flamengo's 1-1 draw in a friendly with Uruguay.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28

ACTION: Manchester United, without Eric Cantona, beat Wrexham 5-2 in an FA Cup fourth round tie . . . Lyon narrow the gap on French league leaders Nantes by defeating Auxerre 3-0 . . . PSV Eindhoven mark their first home match under Dick Advocaat with a brilliant 5-0 win over second-placed Roda . . . in Spain, a late goal from Jose Bakero brings Barcelona a 1-0 win over Bilbao.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

ACTION: Thai Farmers beat Al-Arabi of Qatar 1-0 in the final of the 1994 Asian Club Championship . . . French champions Paris Saint-Germain, playing for most of the second half with 10 men after the expulsion of Daniel Bravo, lose possibly their last chance of getting back into the title race when they lose 2-1 away to Monaco . . . Deportivo La Coruna, down to 10 men after captain Fran Gonzalez is sent off five minutes in to the second half, hold on to beat Albacete 2-1 and pull back one point on Spanish leaders Real Madrid, who draw 0-0 away to Betis.

ITALY: The Genoa-Milan game is abandoned at half-time "as a mark of respect" after a Genoa fan is stabbed to death in fighting outside the Marassi stadium. A further 16 fans are injured.

MONDAY, JANUARY 30

ENGLAND: Russia winger Andrei Kanchelskis insists Manchester United will retain the English premier league title despite the suspension of striker Eric Cantona.

FRANCE: Rolland Courbis, trainer of second division Toulouse, is given a three-year suspended prison sentence for financial malpractice while he was coach of then first division Toulon. Courbis, who is also fined £40,000, is convicted by a Marseille court of using forged receipts to falsify Toulon's books and for paying bonuses to players which were not declared to the tax authorities.

ITALY: Domestic sports authorities suspended all national sport scheduled for next Sunday in a response to the killing of a fan at Genoa before the Genoa-Milan game. The unprecedented decision is taken in Rome by senior officials from the National Olympic Committee (CONI) and the Italian league and federation. Police in Genoa report five arrests in connection with the stabbing. Federation president Antonio Matarrese says: "Soccer is not guilty. But we understood this time, with this death, that we had reached rock bottom."

PORTUGAL: Romario is acclaimed as FIFA Footballer of the Year at the annual A Bola/ESM Gala in Lisbon. Hristo Stoichkov is second, Roberto Baggio third.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

BELGIUM: Brugge move up into second place after a 2-0 win over leaders Standard Liege.

ENGLAND: Eric Cantona is told by Manchester United chief executive and chairman Martin Edwards that he will be dismissed immediately if he is involved in any more serious trouble.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

ACTION: Aresenal and Milan draw 0-0 at Highbury in the first leg of the European Supercup.

GERMANY: Bayern Munich, hit by injuries and the impending departure of coach Giovanni Trapattoni, plan ahead by confirming the impending summer signings of midfielders Thomas Strunz (returning from Stuttgart) and Andy Herzog (from Werder Bremen) . . . Koln and local second division rivals Fortuna will play a benefit match next month in aid of flood disaster victim.

REP IRELAND: Southampton full-back Jeff Kenna is called up for his first cap after being called into the Republic of Ireland squad to meet England in a European qualifying warm-up game in Dublin on February 15.

OBITUARIES

ERICH HOF . . . former Austrian international forward and later national team manager, died aged 58. Hof, who is second top scorer in Austria's history with 28 goals, behind Hans Krankl's 34, was also twice leading scorer in the Austrian first division in 1959 and 1961 for Sportclub Vienna, winning the championship in the first of those years and the cup in the second. As a coach he guided FK Austria to two league titles and one cup win.

SIR JOHN SMITH . . . chairman of Liverpool during their greatest era, has died aged 74. Smith was in charge at Anfield from 1973-1990, during which Liverpool won 22 major trophies: four European Champions Cups, one UEFA Cup, 10 league titles, three FA Cups and four League Cups. It was under Smith's reign that Bob Paisley was named manager in 1974, and Kenny Dalglish was his surprise choice 11 years later, after Joe Fagan's solitary and highly successful year. But his reign also embraced two of the darkest days involving an English League club, the 1985 Heysel riot and the 1989 Hillsborough tragedy. Smith was knighted in 1990 and retired from Liverpool five months later. He was also chairman of the Sports Council from 1985 to 1989, overseeing major new initiatives to combat drug abuse.

global TRANSFERS

(Loan moves in italics)

Steve **AGNEW**	M	Leicester City	Sunderland
Paul **ALLEN**	M	Southampton	Stoke City
Andreas **ANDERSSON***	F	Tidlehoms (Swe)	Liverpool
Declan **BOYLE**	D	Sligo Rovers	Celtic
BRANCO	D	Corinthians	Flamengo
Lee **CHAPMAN**	F	West Ham	Ipswich Town
Gary **CHARLES**	D	Derby Co	Aston Villa
Adama **CISSA**	D	Senegal	Lille
Andy **COLE**	F	Newcastle	Man Utd
O'Neill **DONALDSON**	F	Doncaster	Sheffield Wed
Iain **DOWIE**	F	Southampton	Crystal Palace
Jan **ERIKSSON***	D	Kaiserslautern	Urawa Reds (Jap)
Juan **FERREIRA**	M	Defensor (Uru)	Dundee Utd
Luis **FIGO***	M	Sporting Lisbon	Parma
Robert **FLECK**	F	Chelsea	Bristol City
Kevin **FRANCIS**	F	Stockport Co	Birmingham City
Uwe **FUCHS**	F	Kaiserslautern	Middlesbrough
Mike **GALLOWAY**	M	Celtic	Leicester
Keith **GILLESPIE**	F	Man Utd	Newcastle
Brian **HAMILTON**	M	Hibernian	Hearts
John **HARTSON**	F	Luton Town	Arsenal
Tom **HOVI**	D	HamKam	Charlton Ath
Tommy **JOHNSON**	F	Derby Co	Aston Villa
Jason **KEARTON**	G	Everton	Notts Co
Chris **KIWOMYA**	F	Ipswich	Arsenal
Dennis **KLIOUEV**	D	Moscow Dynamo	Feyenoord
Stefan **LANDBERG**	M	Osters Vaxjo	IFK Gothenburg
Mats **LILIENBERG**	M	1860 Munich	IFK Gothenburg
Alan **MAIN**	G	Dundee Utd	St Johnstone
Raymond **McSTAY**	D	Celtic	Hamilton
Steve **NICOL**	D	Liverpool	Notts Co
Lee **NOGAN**	F	Watford	Reading
Stephane **PAILLE**	F	Lyon	Servette
Gerald **PASSI**	M	St Etienne	Nagoya Grampus 8
Mark **ROBINS**	F	Norwich	Leicester
ROMARIO	F	Barcelona	Flamengo
Bernard **SCHUITEMAN**	D	Bayer Leverkusen	Feyenoord
Kevin **SCOTT**	D	Tottenham	Port Vale
SERGIO	F	Amora (Por)	Dundee Utd
Neil **SHIPPERLEY**	F	Chelsea	Southampton
Claudio **TAFFAREL**	G	Parma	Atletico Mineiro
Simon **TRACEY**	G	Sheffield Utd	Norwich
Paul **TROLLOPE**	M	Torquay	Derby Co
Carlos **VALDERRAMA***	M	Junior Baranquilla	Newell's OB
Pierre **VAN HOOIJDONK**	F	NAC Breda	Celtic
Anthony **YEBOAH**	F	Eintracht Frankfurt	Leeds Utd

* = subject to confirmation

Flamengo new boy . . . Branco

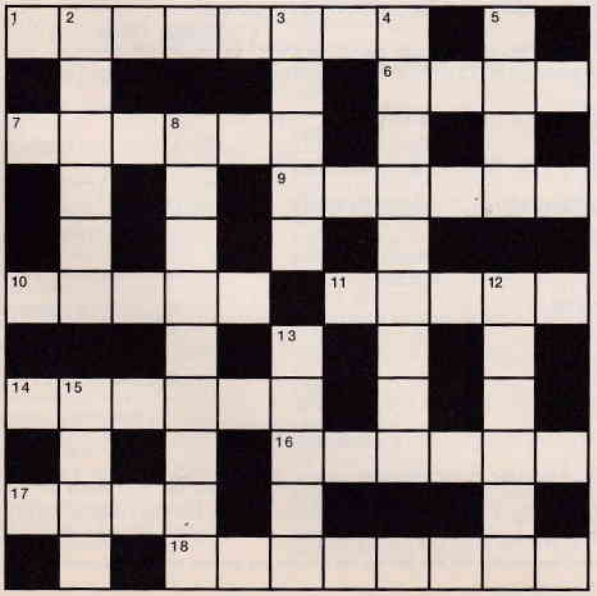
X-WORD

LAST MONTH'S WINNERS:
Henk Roelfs, Stradskanaal, Holland; **Terry Ransome,** Ipswich, Suffolk; **Adrian Colleg,** Eastbourne, East Sussex; **Andrew Williams,** Ashford, Kent; **Mark Gilmartin,** Failsworth, Manchester.

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION
ACROSS: 1. Piontek 7. Reyna 8. Ramzy 9. Santana 10. Pahlplatz 15. Lacatus 18. Oscar 19. Rouen 20. Angloma
DOWN: 1. Paris 2. Olmeta 3. Thys 4. Krankl 5. MyPa 6. Lalas 11. Litana 12. Trucco 13. Flora 14. Perea 16. Cruz 17. Song

WIN. . . an exclusive WORLD SOCCER sweatshirt

The first five correct entries will each win a WORLD SOCCER sweatshirt. Send completed entries by MARCH 1, to: WORLD SOCCER CROSSWORD (MARCH) King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London, SE1 9LS



CLUES ACROSS
1 ..... Spanish club from the Heliodoro Rodriguez Stadium (8)
6 ..... Tirol Innsbruck's Senegal forward recruited from Wattenscheid (4)
7 ..... Prague's 1994 Czech Republic League champions (6)
9 ..... Bongartz's predecessor as Duisburg coach (6)
10 ..... Eight-times Swiss champions promoted to Division 1 last season (5)
11 ..... Brazilian midfielder with Rai at Paris Saint-Germain (5)
14 ..... US 1990 and 1994 World Cup defender of Argentinian descent (6)
16 ..... Prolific young Nantes striker capped by France (6)
17 ..... 27-year-old Barcelona and Spain midfield stalwart (4)
18 ..... Bari Colombian bought from Atletico Junior (8)

CLUES DOWN
2 ..... UNAM midfielder, veteran of Mexico's 1986 World Cup side (6)
3 ..... World Cup runners-up, 1994 (5)
4 ..... African Champions Cup finalists from Tunisia (9)
5 ..... Man Utd and England midfield man once at West Ham (4)
8 ..... Norwegian club which completed a league title hat-trick (9)
12 ..... Home ground of Ajax Amsterdam (2,4)
13 ..... England skipper in 1966 (5)
15 ..... Raja Casablanca and Morocco custodian (4)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

POSTCODE _____

Compiled by Christine Ansell

RESULTS

Buelinckx hat-trick as Brugge thrash Oostende . . . FA Cup results . .

BELGIUM

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

MIDWEEK

MECHELEN 6 (Asselman 14, Sanders 17, Molby 27, Pereira 50, Urban pen 60, Martens 68)
FC LIEGE 1 (Milosevic 5). **Att:** 5,500.

CERCLE BRUGGE 5 (Claeys 21, Munteanu 52, 90, Torma 79, 83)
LIERSE 0. **Att:** 2,600.

GENT 1 (Viscaal 53)
EENDRACHT AALST 2 (De Bilde 17, Krncevic 20). **Att:** 12,000.

STANDARD 1 (Bettagno 69)
SERAING 0. **Att:** 15,000.

RWDM 2 (De Meyer 20, Camus 24)
BEVEREN 0. **Att:** 3,000.

OOSTENDE 0
ANDERLECHT 2 (Zetterberg 36, Degryse 77). **Att:** 9,000.

ST TRUIDEN 0
ANTWERP 0. **Att:** 8,900.

CHARLEROI 1 (Misse-Misse 15)
CLUB BRUGGE 1 (Staekens 52). **Att:** 8,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

WEEKEND

LOMMEL v FC LIEGE – *postponed*

LIERSE v EKEREN – *postponed*

ANDERLECHT v GENT – *postponed*

BEVEREN v OOSTENDE – *postponed*

ANTWERP v CHARLEROI – *postponed*

MECHELEN v ST TRUIDEN – *postponed*

AALST v CERCLE – *postponed*

SERAING v RWDM – *postponed*

CLUB BRUGGE v STANDARD – *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

WEEKEND

ANDERLECHT 1 (Grun 7)
CERCLE BRUGES 1 (Annicaert 70). **Att:** 22,000.

BEVEREN 4 (Goots 44, 63, Van Overtveld 69, Thoelen 77)
GENT 0. **Att:** 5,00.

CLUB BRUGGE 3 (Eijkelamp 17, 55, Verheyen 84)
RWDM 1 (Williams 67). **Att:** 7,000.

LIERSE 0
LOMMEL 0. **Att:** 6,000.

MECHELEN 1 (Gysbrechts 26)
CHARLEROI 3 (Pisont 36, Brogno 40, Segers 90 og). **Att:** 7,000.

ST TRUIDEN 1 (Daelmans 50)
FC LIEGE 0. **Att:** 9,000.

EENDRACHT AALST 0
EKEREN 3 (M'Ghoghi 15, Abeels 32, Hofmans 89). **Att:** 9,000.

ANTWERP 0
STANDARD 1 (Goossens 9). **Att:** 8,500.

SERAING 2 (Isaias 34, Lawaree 48)
OOSTENDE 2 (Claesen 41, De Waele 80). **Att:** 3,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

MIDWEEK

BELGIAN CUP – 5TH RND

CLUB BRUGGE 4 GENT 0

WEEKEND

STANDARD 3 (Vidmar 58, Leonard 69, Goossens 71)
MECHELEN 1 (Eszenyi 83). **Att:** 12,000.

CHARLEROI 0
ST TRUIDEN 4 (Daelmans 40, Nielsen 52, 60, 64). **Att:** 6,000.

GENT 1 (Herreman 89)
SERAING 0. **Att:** 5,000.

LOMMEL 1 (Mukanya 29)
EENDRACHT AALST 0. **Att:** 6,000.

RWDM 3 (S. Laeremans 8, Kulcsar 18, Sziubinski 63)
ANTWERP 1 (Vandenbergh 23). **Att:** 6,000.

CERCLE BRUGES 2 (Lauwers 48, Renty 90)
BEVEREN 0. **Att:** 4,000.

EKEREN 2 (Hofmans 3, Abeels 65)
ANDERLECHT 3 (Van den Buys og 26, 55 og, Walem 63). **Att:** 8,000.

FC LIEGE 2 (Varga 7, Kimoni 86)
LIERSE 0. **Att:** 5,000.

OOSTENDE 1 (Orig 67)
CLUB BRUGGE 6 (Eijkelamp 26, Staelens 30, Buelinckx 33, 60, 72, Vermant 37). **Att:** 8,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

MIDWEEK

BELGIAN CUP – 5TH RND

CERCLE 2 ANDERLECHT 4

ANTWERP 7 DEINZE 4

SERAING 1 OOSTENDE 1 *(aet)*
Seraing won 6-5 on pens

EENDRACHT 8 BERLAAR 1

MECHELEN 1 MOESKROEN 0

EKEREN 2 LIERSE 0

LOKEREN 0 BEVEREN 7

WEEKEND

CHARLEROI 4 (Gerard 5, 47, Brogno 65, 80)
FC LIEGE 1 (Varga 21). **Att:** 10,000.

MECHELEN 1 (Sanders 83)
RWDM 0. **Att:** 6,500.

ANTWERP 2 (Severeyns 17, Godefroid 69)
OOSTENDE 1 (Cuffez 58). **Att:** 3,000.

BEVEREN 1 (Van Overtvelt 31)
EKEREN 1 (Hofmans 35). **Att:** 5,000.

ANDERLECHT v LOMMEL – *postponed*

ST TRUIDEN 1 (Van Houdt 1)
STANDARD 1 (Goossens 17). **Att:** 11,000.

SERAING 4 (Edmilson 14, 41, Teppers 48, Ducoulombiere 58)
CERCLE BRUGES 1 (Annicaert 62). **Att:** 4,500.

EENDRACHT AALST v LIERSE – *postponed*

CLUB BRUGGE v GENT – *postponed*

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Standard	21	13	5	3	34	17	31
Club Brugge	20	13	4	3	50	19	30
Anderlecht	19	13	4	2	48	20	30
Aalst	20	9	4	7	42	40	22
Lierse	19	9	3	7	32	34	21
Seraing	21	7	7	7	33	27	21
RWDM	21	7	7	7	23	25	21
Mechelen	21	8	4	9	28	28	20
Ekeren	19	7	6	6	38	26	20
Lommel	20	7	6	7	24	24	20
St Truiden	21	6	8	7	21	25	20
Beveren	21	6	7	8	25	31	19
Charleroi	21	6	7	8	20	29	19
Antwerp	21	7	4	10	32	33	18
Ghent	19	7	3	9	26	34	17
Cercle Bruges	21	6	5	10	26	36	17
Oostend	21	3	5	13	21	51	11
FC Liege	20	2	5	13	24	48	9

ENGLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

MIDWEEK

SOUTHAMPTON 2 (Hall 8, Le Tissier 90)
ASTON VILLA 1 (Houghton 79). **Att:** 13,874.

COCA-COLA (LEAGUE) CUP – 4TH RND REPLAY

NEWCASTLE 0
MAN CITY 2 (Rosler 11, Walsh 80). **Att:** 30,156.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

MIDWEEK

(MONDAY, DECEMBER 26)

ARSENAL 0
ASTON VILLA 0. **Att:** 34,452.

CHELSEA 2 (Spencer pen 58) Newton 77)
MAN UTD 3 (Hughes 21, Cantona pen 46, McClair 78). **Att:** 31,161.

COVENTRY 0
NOTTM FOREST 0. **Att:** 19,224.

CRYSTAL PALACE 0
QPR 0. **Att:** 16,372.

EVERTON 1 (Ferguson 36)
SHEFF WED 4 (Bright 39, Whittingham 43, 79, Ingesson 48). **Att:** 37,080.

LEEDS 0
NEWCASTLE 0. **Att:** 39,337.

LEICESTER 1 (Roberts 87)
LIVERPOOL 2 (Fowler pen 67, Rush 87). **Att:** 21,393.

MAN CITY 1 (Quinn 22)
BLACKBURN 3 (Shearer 10, Atkins 16, Le Saux 66). **Att:** 23,387.

NORWICH 0
TOTTENHAM 2 (Barmby 11, Sheringham 90). **Att:** 21,814.

SOUTHAMPTON 2 (Dodd 11, Le Tissier 43)
WIMBLEDON 3 (Holdsworth 20, pen 72, Harford 38). **Att:** 14,603.

WEST HAM 1 (Cottee 16)
IPSWICH 1 (Thomsen 71). **Att:** 20,562.

(TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27)

NOTTM FOREST 1 (Bohinen 51)
NORWICH 0. **Att:** 21,010.

TOTTENHAM 0
CRYSTAL PALACE 0. **Att:** 27,30.

(WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28)

ASTON VILLA 3 (Staunton 9, Yorke 32, Taylor 82)
CHELSEA 0. **Att:** 32,901.

IPSWICH 0
ARSENAL 2 (Wright 16, Campbell 79). **Att:** 22,054.

LIVERPOOL 2 (Phelan og 55, Fowler 82)
MAN CITY 0. **Att:** 38,122.

MAN UTD 1 (Kanchelskis 61)
LEICESTER 1 (Whitlow 65). **Att:** 43,789.

QPR 2 (Barker 7, Gallen 49)
SOUTHAMPTON 2 (Dodd 14, Hughes 71). **Att:** 16,078.

SHEFF WED 5 (Bright 14, 45, Waddle 38, Whittingham 57, 64)
COVENTRY 1 (Ndlovu pen 17). **Att:** 26,056.

WIMBLEDON 1 (Fear 55)
WEST HAM 0. **Att:** 11,212.

WEEKEND

ARSENAL 1 (Jensen 64)
QPR 3 (Gallen 3, Allen 76, Impey 78). **Att:** 32,393.

CHELSEA 1 (Furlong 57)
WIMBLEDON 1 (Ekoku 68). **Att:** 16,105.

COVENTRY 0
TOTTENHAM 4 (Darby og 7, Barmby 67, Anderton 77, Sheringham 81). **Att:** 19,905.

CRYSTAL PALACE 0
BLACKBURN 1 (Sherwood 65). **Att:** 14,232.

EVERTON 4 (Ferguson 26, Rideout 70, 74, Watson 90)
IPSWICH 1 (Sedgley 9). **Att:** 25,659.

LEEDS 0
LIVERPOOL 2 (Redknapp 18, Fowler 76). **Att:** 38,563.

LEICESTER 0
SHEFF WED 1 (Hyde 40). **Att:** 20,624.

MAN CITY 2 (Rosler 14, 54)
ASTON VILLA 2 (I Brightwell og 55, Saunders 59). **Att:** 22,513.

NORWICH 2 (Adams 1, Ward 10)
NEWCASTLE 1 (Fox pen 40). **Att:** 21,172.

SOUTHAMPTON 2 (Magilton 44, D. Hughes 74)
MAN UTD 2 (Butt 51, Pallister 78). **Att:** 15,204.

WEST HAM 3 (Cottee 25, Bishop 27, Hughes 45)
NOTTM FOREST 1 (McGregor 90). **Att:** 20,644.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

MIDWEEK

ASTON VILLA 0
LEEDS 0. **Att:** 35,038.

BLACKBURN 4 (Shearer pen 14, 75, 79 pen, Le Saux 61)
WEST HAM 2 (Cottee 33, Dicks 58). **Att:** 25,503.

IPSWICH 4 (Kiwomya 34, 62, Tanner 54, Yallop 73)
LEICESTER 1 (Roberts 53). **Att:** 15,803.

LIVERPOOL 4 (Scales 14, Fowler 38, 47, Rush 83)
NORWICH 0. **Att:** 34,709.

NEWCASTLE 0
MAN CITY 0. **Att:** 34,437.

NOTTM FOREST 1 (Bull 76)
CRYSTAL PALACE 0. **Att:** 21,326.

SHEFF WED 1 (Hyde 19)
SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Le Tissier pen 70). **Att:** 28,424.

TOTTENHAM 1 (Popescu 22)
ARSENAL 0. **Att:** 28,747.

WIMBLEDON 2 (Harford 4, 8)
EVERTON 1 (Rideout 17). **Att:** 9,506.

MAN UTD 2 (Scholes 29, Cantona pen 49)
COVENTRY 0. **Att:** 43,130.

QPR v CHELSEA – *postponed*

WEEKEND

FA CUP – 3RD RND

BRISTOL CITY 0 STOKE CITY 0

BURY 2 TRANMERE 2

CAMBRIDGE 2 BURNLEY 4

LUTON 1 BRISTOL ROVERS 1

MANSFIELD 2 WOLVES 3

PORTSMOUTH 3 BOLTON 1

READING 1 OLDHAM 3

SCARBOROUGH 0 WATFORD 0

SUNDERLAND 1 CARLISLE 1

SWANSEA 1 MIDDLESBRO 1

SWINDON 2 MARLOW 0

LEICESTER 2 ENFIELD 0

COVENTRY 1 WEST BROM 1

WIMBLEDON 1 COLCHESTER 0

MILLWALL 0 ARSENAL 0

GILLINGHAM 1 SHEFF WED 2

BIRMINGHAM 0 LIVERPOOL 0

AYLESBURY 0 QPR 4
(played at Loftus Road)

GRIMSBY 0 NORWICH 1

SOUTHAMPTON 2 SOUTHEND 0

TOTTENHAM 3 ALTRINCHAM 0

WREXHAM 2 IPSWICH 1

NOTTM F 2 PLYMOUTH 0

WALSALL 1 LEEDS 1

EVERTON 1 DERBY 0

WYCOMBE 0 WEST HAM 2

BARNSLEY 0 ASTON VILLA 2

CHELSEA 3 CHARLTON 0

C PALACE 5 LINCOLN 1

NOTTS CO 2 MAN CITY 2

NEWCASTLE 1 BLACKBURN 1

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

MIDWEEK

FA CUP – 3RD RND

SHEFFIELD UTD 0
MAN UTD 2

COCA-COLA (LEAGUE) CUP – QUARTER-FINALS

BOLTON 1 (Lee 66)
NORWICH 0. **Att:** 17,029.

SWINDON 3 (Mutch 26, 61, Fjortoft 36)
MILLWALL 1 (Mitchell 86). **Att:** 11,772.

LIVERPOOL 1 (Rush 59)
ARSENAL 0. **Att:** 35,026.

CRYSTAL PALACE 4 (Pitcher 59, Salako 81, Armstrong 85, Preece 89)
MAN CITY 0. **Att:** 16,668.

WEEKEND

ARSENAL 1 (Wright 4)
EVERTON 1 (Watson 13). **Att:** 34,743.

ASTON VILLA 2 (Fashanu 7, Ehiogu 76)
QPR 1 (Yates 87). **Att:** 26,578.

BLACKBURN 3 (Warhurst 54, Wilcox 79, Chettle og 88)
NOTTM FOREST 0. **Att:** 27,510.

CHELSEA 1 (Spencer 34)
SHEFFIELD WED 1 (Nolan 90). **Att:** 17,285.

CRYSTAL PALACE 2 (Newman 24, Ndah 44)
LEICESTER 0. **Att:** 12,707.

LEEDS 0
SOUTHAMPTON 0. **Att:** 28,953.

LIVERPOOL 0
IPSWICH 1 (Tanner 31). **Att:** 32,733.

MAN CITY 0
COVENTRY 0. **Att:** 20,632.

NORWICH 1 (Goss 22)
WIMBLEDON 2 (Reeves 45, Ekoku 49). **Att:** 18,261.

WEST HAM 1 (Boere 11)
TOTTENHAM 2 (Sheringham 59, Klinsmann 80). **Att:** 24,573.

NEWCASTLE 1 (Kitson 67)
MAN UTD 1 (Hughes 13). **Att:** 34,306.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

MIDWEEK

FA CUP – 3RD RND REPLAYS

ARSENAL 0 MILLWALL 2

BLACKBURN 1 NEWCASTLE 2

MAN CITY 5 NOTTS CO 2

WEST BROM 1 COVENTRY 2

LEEDS 5 WALSALL 2 *(aet)*

LIVERPOOL 1 BIRMINGHAM 1
Aet, Liverpool won 2-0 on pens

CARLISLE 1 SUNDERLAND 3

MIDDLESBRO 1 SWANSEA 2

WATFORD 2 SCARBOROUGH 0

BRISTOL ROVERS 0 LUTON 1

STOKE CITY 1 BRISTOL CITY 3

TRANMERE 3 BURY 0

WEEKEND

COVENTRY 0
ARSENAL 1 (Hartson 78). **Att:** 14,468.

EVERTON 3 (Ferguson 2, 88, Rideout 54)
CRYSTAL PALACE 1 (Coleman 79). **Att:** 23,733.

IPSWICH 2 (Slater 74, Wark 80 pen)
CHELSEA 2 (Stein 67, Burley 88). **Att:** 17,296.

NOTTM FOREST 1 (Collymore pen 53)
ASTON VILLA 2 (Fashanu 32, Saunders 68). **Att:** 24,598.

SHEFFIELD WED 0
NEWCASTLE 0. **Att:** 31,215.

MAN UTD 1 (Cantona 81)
BLACKBURN 0. **Att:** 43,742.

LEICESTER v LEEDS – *postponed*

QPR v NORWICH – *postponed*

SOUTHAMPTON v WEST HAM – *postponed*

TOTTENHAM v MAN CITY – *postponed*

WIMBLEDON v LIVERPOOL – *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

MIDWEEK

WEST HAM 0
SHEFFIELD WED 2 (Waddle 32, Bright 83). **Att:** 14,554.

ARSENAL 1 (Hartson 21)
SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Magilton 74). **Att:** 27,213.

LEEDS 4 (Masinga 31, 65, White 33, Deane 84)
QPR 0. **Att:** 28,780.

LIVERPOOL 0
EVERTON 0. **Att:** 39,505.

ASTON VILLA 1 (Saunders 18)
TOTTENHAM 0. **Att:** 40,017.

CRYSTAL PALACE 1 (Southgate 80)
MAN UTD 1 (May 60). **Att:** 18,224.

CHELSEA 0
NOTTM FOREST 2 (Collymore 33, 52). **Att:** 17,890.

MAN CITY 0
LEICESTER 1 (Robins 70). **Att:** 21,007.

NEWCASTLE 2 (Fox 34, Kitson 51)
WIMBLEDON 1 (Ekoku 78). **Att:** 34,374.

NORWICH 2 (Adams 32 pen, Ward 56)
COVENTRY 2 (Dublin 22, Jenkinson 76). **Att:** 14,024.

WEEKEND

BLACKBURN 4 (Shearer 2, 28, 90 pen, Sherwood 49)
IPSWICH 1 (Wark 76 pen). **Att:** 21,325.

FA CUP – 4TH RND

BURNLEY 0
LIVERPOOL 0. **Att:** 20,551.

COVENTRY 0
NORWICH 0. **Att:** 15,101.

LEEDS 3 (White 8, Palmer 45, Masinga 57)
OLDHAM 2 (Halle 56, Palmer 59 og). **Att:** 25,010.

LUTON 1 (Biggins 81)
SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Shipperley 53). **Att:** 9,938.

MAN CITY 1 (Walsh 7)
ASTON VILLA 0. **Att:** 21,177.

MAN UTD 5 (Irwin 17, 73 pen, Giggs 27, McClair 67, Humes 80 og)
WREXHAM 2 (Durkan 9, Cross 90). **Att:** 43,222.

MILLWALL 0
CHELSEA 0. **Att:** 18,573.

NEWCASTLE 3 (Kitson 40, 46, 72)
SWANSEA 0. **Att:** 34,372.

NOTTM FOREST 1 (Bohinen 32)
CRYSTAL PALACE 2 (Armstrong 5, Dowie 53). **Att:** 16,790.

PORTSMOUTH 0
LEICESTER 1 (Roberts 44). **Att:** 14,928.

QPR 1 (Impey 20)
WEST HAM 0. **Att:** 17,694.

WATFORD 1 (Hessenthaler 45)
SWINDON 0. **Att:** 11,202.

BRISTOL CITY 0
EVERTON 1 (Jackson 78). **Att:** 19,816.

SUNDERLAND 1 (Gray 74)
TOTTENHAM 4 (Klinsmann 51 pen, 86, Sheringham 57, Melville 64 og). **Att:** 21,135.

RESULTS

Marseille beat Sochaux in French Cup . . . Savicevic scores four as Mi

TRANMERE 0
WIMBLEODN 2 (Leonhardsen 31, Earle 51). **Att:** 21,135.

SHEFFIELD WED 0
WOLVES 0. **Att:** 21,757.

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blackburn	27	18	5	4	58	24	59
Man United	27	17	6	4	48	21	57
Newcastle	27	13	9	5	45	29	48
Liverpool	26	13	8	5	45	21	47
Nottm Forest	27	13	7	7	40	29	46
Tottenham	26	12	6	8	44	37	42
Leeds	26	10	9	7	34	28	39
Sheffield Wed	27	10	9	8	36	33	39
Wimbledon	26	10	6	10	31	40	36
Norwich	26	9	7	10	25	29	34
Arsenal	27	8	9	10	30	31	33
Chelsea	26	8	8	10	34	37	32
Man City	26	8	8	10	35	41	32
Aston Villa	27	7	10	10	32	36	31
Southampton	26	6	12	8	37	42	30
Crystal Palace	27	7	9	11	21	26	30
QPR	25	8	6	11	38	44	30
Everton	27	7	9	11	27	36	30
West Ham	26	8	4	14	24	33	28
Coventry	27	6	10	11	25	45	28
Ipswich	27	5	5	17	29	55	20
Leicester	26	4	6	16	24	45	18

FRANCE

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

MIDWEEK

LEAGUE CUP – 4TH RND

NICE 0 NANTES 3
CANNES 2 LYON 3
CAEN 3 ST ETIENNE 1
LE HAVRE 1 LILLE 0
METZ 1 MONACO 4
TOULOUSE 2 SOCHAUX 1
BASTIA 3 AMIENS 0
NIORT 2 LENS 3
RENNES 1 SEDAN 0
RED STAR 0 MONTPELLIER 1
PERPIGNAN 2 STRASBOURG 0
DUNKERQUE 1 MARTIGUES 0
GUINGAMP 1 VALENCIENNES 0
PARIS SG 1 AUXERRE 0
CHATEAUROUX 3 BORDEAUX 1 *(aet)*
LE MANS 0 ST BRIEUC 0 *(aet)*
Le mans won on pens

WEEKEND

BASTIA 0
AUXERRE 1 (Baticle 61). **Att:** 4,500.

CANNES 2 (Micoud 36, Bedrossian 90)
NICE 0. **Att:** 6,000.

BORDEAUX 2 (Witschge 14, Dugarry 18)
RENNES 1 (Andre 79). **Att:** 12,000.

LE HAVRE 1 (Lagrange 6)
MARTIGUES 0. **Att:** 8,986.

LENS 1 (Tiehi 39)
MONTPELLIER 1 (Sanchez 78). **Att:** 16,970.

MONACO 3 (Anderson da Silva 7, Petersen 23, 70)
CAEN 0. **Att:** 3,000.

NANTES 3 (Loko 16, 33, 40)
LILLE 0. **Att:** 20,000.

STRASBOURG 1 (Gohel 57)
ST ETIENNE 1 (Blanc pen 13). **Att:** 9,051.

METZ 1
LYON 2
Abandoned: 63rd minute
● *FFF ruled result should stand, Metz have appealed*

SOCHAUX v PARIS SG – *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

MIDWEEK

PARIS SG 0
NANTES 3 (Loko 34, N'Doram 62, 75). **Att:** 45,266.

FRENCH CUP – 1ST RND

MONTPELLIER 2 ST ETIENNE 0
METZ 2 DUNKERQUE 0
MARTIGUES 1 LE MANS 0
CAEN 1 ST BRIEUC 3
SETE 0 LILLE 2
PAU 1 NICE 2
DIJON 0 BASTIA 1
LOUHANS-CUISEAUX 3
STRASBOURG 4
LA ROCHE-SUR-YON 0
AUXERRE 2
CHATEAU-THIERRY 0
LE HAVRE 2
FORBACH 2 BORDEAUX 4
TRELLISAC 0 LYON 4
VITROLLES 0 LENS 1
VITRE 0 MONACO 5
CLUSES-SCIONZIER 1
NANTES 2
ST LOUISIENNE 0 CANNES 2
PARIS SG 3 RENNES 1 *(aet)*
SOCHAUX 0 MARSEILLE 0 *(aet)*
Marseille won on pens

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

WEEKEND

MARTIGUES 0
LENS 0. **Att:** 7,000.

AUXERRE 1 (Laslandes 52)
METZ 1 (Pierre 48). **Att:** 12,000.

CAEN 2 (Huysman 1, Dedebant 14)
BASTIA 1 (Drobnjak 50). **Att:** 12,811.

LILLE 1 (Duncker 13)
MONACO 0. **Att:** 7,000.

LYON 3 (Maurice 1, Roche 37, Rivenet 72)
CANNES 1 (Kozniku 22). **Att:** 21,370.

MONTPELLIER 2 (Divert 1, 28)
LE HAVRE 1 (Meszoly 30). **Att:** 6,000.

NICE 3 (Chaouch 33, 36, Fugen 90)
STRASBOURG 4 (Leboeuf pen 14, Mostovoi 27, Bouafia 55, Keller 63). **Att:** 3,200.

ST ETIENNE 2 (Blanc 72, Ziadi 80)
BORDEAUX 1 (Bancarel 68). **Att:** 11,933.

RENNES v SOCHAUX – *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

MIDWEEK

LEAGUE CUP – 5TH RND

PARIS SG 2 LYON 1
LE HAVRE 2 CAEN 1
NANTES 0 BASTIA 1 *(aet)*
MONACO 2 DUNKERQUE 0
PERPIGNAN 1 MONTPELLIER 1
Aet, Montpellier won 6-5 on pens
TOULOUSE 2 LENS 2 *(aet)*
Toulouse won 2-1 on pens
GUINGAMP 2 LE MANS 1
CHATEAUROUX v RENNES – *postponed*

WEEKEND

NANTES v MONTPELLIER – *postponed*

LYON 3 (Maurice 32, Debbah 51, S. Roche 75)
AUXERRE 0. **Att:** 30,430.

MONACO 2 (S. Anderson 41, Madar 83)
PARIS SG 1 (Ginola 32). **Att:** 10,000.

CANNES 2 (Horlaville 50, Bedrossian 61)
BORDEAUX 0. **Att:** 6,000.

LENS 2 (Debeve 4, R. Boli 85)
NICE 1 (Chaouch 37). **Att:** 15,198.

STRASBOURG 2 (Gravelaine 21, 62)
RENNES 2 (Grassi 12, Wiltford 59). **Att:**10,841.

METZ 4 (Pires 12, Pouget 55, 66, Gaillot 77)
CAEN 0. **Att:** 5,000.

SOCHAUX 1 (Dubois 82 og)
MARTIGUES 1 (L. David 85). **Att:** 4,516.

LE HAVRE v ST ETIENNE – *postponed*

BASTIA 3 (Rodriguez 9, 90, Vandecasteele 35)
LILLE 1 (Bonalair 64). **Att:** 5,000.

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nantes	24	15	9	0	47	18	54
Lyon	24	12	8	4	38	23	44
Paris SG	24	13	5	6	35	22	44
Cannes	24	12	4	8	34	23	40
Lens	24	9	10	5	30	22	37
Auxerre	24	8	12	4	37	24	36
Strasbourg	24	10	6	8	34	29	36
Bordeaux	24	10	6	8	32	29	36
Monaco	24	8	9	7	24	19	33
Metz	24	9	6	9	33	33	33
Martigues	24	8	8	8	27	32	32
Le Havre	24	7	11	6	29	25	31
St Etienne	24	8	6	10	31	29	30
Rennes	24	7	7	10	28	40	28
Lille	24	7	6	11	17	30	27
Bastia	24	6	6	12	23	35	24
Montpellier	24	4	11	9	24	38	22
Nice	24	5	6	13	22	36	21
Caen	24	6	3	15	21	38	21
Sochaux	24	5	4	15	24	45	19

HOLLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

MIDWEEK

NEC 0
AJAX 2 (Van Den Brom 17, 58). **Att:** 21,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

WEEKEND

WILLEM II v HEERENVEEN – *postponed*
MVV v SPARTA – *postponed*
NAC v PSV – *postponed*
RKC v VITESSE – *postponed*
FC TWENTE v AJAX – *postponed*
FEYENOORD v RODA JC – *postponed*
VOLENDAM v DORDRECHT – *postponed*
UTRECHT v GA EAGLES – *postponed*
GRONINGEN v NEC – *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

WEEKEND

RKC 1 (Van Rijswijk 7)
AJAX 1 (Kluivert 9). **Att:** 6,100.

VOLENDAM 1 (Hans Bond 15)
SPARTA 0. **Att:** 3,200.

UTRECHT 2 (Hofstede 4, Gorter 9)
NEC 2 (Schreur 74, Van Eijkeren 81). **Att:** 5,500.

MVV 1 (Scheepers 33)
GA EAGLES 1 (De Gier 66). **Att:** 4,500.

FEYENOORD 5 (Blinker 21, Bosz 26, Kiprich 33, 59 pen, Larsson 37)
DORDRECHT 4 (Wouden 3, Langerak 54, Hoop 61, 89). **Att:** 22,124.

GRONINGEN 0
HEERENVEEN 0. **Att:** 15,010.

NAC 0
WILLEM II 0. **Att:** 10,489.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

WEEKEND

DORDRECHT 1 (Hoop 11)
TWENTE 2 (Zwijnenberg 45, Mols 49). **Att:** 1,800.

GA EAGLES 0
VOLENDAM 2 (Ronald Bond 29, Steur 66). **Att:** 5,000.

HEERENVEEN 2 (Keur 63, 86)
UTRECHT 0. **Att:** 12,600.

RODA JC 2 (Atteveld 31, De Kock 78)
RKC 0. **Att:** 6,500.

WILLEM II 3 (Boekweg og 27, Laros 37, Stewart 87)
GRONINGEN 0. **Att:** 5,700.

AJAX 1 (Kluivert pen 80)
PSV 0. **Att:** 40,000.

FEYENOORD 4 (Kiprich 55, 72, Scholten 58, Blinker 87)
SPARTA 0. **Att:** 25,947.

NEC 4 (Kooistra 13, 27, Van Diemen 21, Pothuizen 68)
MVV 0. **Att:** 2,000.

VITESSE 1 (Van Der Weerden 16)
NAC 1 (Brood 83). **Att:** 7,377.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

WEEKEND

TWENTE 3 (Boerebach 1 pen, Bosvelt 37, Kool 68)
SPARTA 3 (Boogers 15,76, Pierren 34). **Att:** 6,700.

PSV 5 (Valckx 5, Pahlplatz 16, Ronaldo 40, 68, Zenden 66)
RODA JC 0. **Att:** 29,100.

UTRECHT 0
WILLEM II 0. **Att:** 4,500.

RKC 4 (Brands 68, 75, Petrovic 78, Streppel 86)
DORDRECHT 1 (Atmodikoro 81 pen). **Att:** 1,800.

VITESSE 2 (Helder 30, Cocu 50)
AJAX 3 (F. De Boer 31, Kluivert 63, Van den Brom 85). **Att:** 12,400.

VOLENDAM 5 (Binken 16, Ooyer 44, Bond 51, Smeets 54, Wasiman 84)
NEC 1 (Van Wanrooy 35). **Att:** 3,000.

FEYENOORD v GA EAGLES – *postponed*

NAC v GRONINGEN – *postponed*

MVV v HEERENVEEN – *postponed*

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	19	14	5	0	51	15	33
Roda JC	19	12	6	1	38	14	30
FC Twente	18	10	6	2	43	28	26
PSV	19	10	5	4	46	23	25
Feyenoord	17	10	3	4	37	27	23
Heerenveen	19	10	3	6	33	31	23
Willem II	20	9	5	6	29	23	23
Vitesse	19	7	7	5	28	28	21
FC Volendam	20	5	8	7	23	29	18
MVV	19	6	4	9	26	35	16
Sparta	20	6	4	10	30	33	16
FC Groningen	18	5	5	8	25	31	15
FC Utrecht	18	5	5	8	21	30	15
NAC	19	4	7	8	27	33	15
NEC	19	5	4	10	29	36	14
RKC	19	4	5	10	25	35	13
GA Eagles	18	1	6	11	14	45	8
Dordrecht	20	0	6	14	15	44	6

ITALY

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

MIDWEEK

MILAN 2 (Simone 2, Savicevic 89)
REGGIANA 1 (Simutenkov 67). **Att:** 50,000.

WEEKEND

BARI 3 (Tovalieri 9, 66, Pedone 73)
MILAN 5 (Massaro 11, Savicevic 39, 52, 55, 84). **Att:** 39,000.

CREMONESE 0
BRESCIA 0. **Att:** 10,000.

FIORENTINA 1 (Batistuta 9)
PARMA 1 (Pin 46). **Att:** 35,000.

GENOA 2 (Van't Schip 23, Manicone 89)
PADOVA 1 (Kreek 74). **Att:** 22,000.

INTER 2 (Festa 57, Fontolan 68)
SAMPDORIA 0. **Att:** 38,000.

JUVENTUS 3 (Ravanelli 32, 82 pen, Vialli 86)
AS ROMA 0. **Att:** 55,000.

LAZIO 7 (Boksic 48, 52, 88, Signori 64, 85, Casiragni 89, Fuser 90)
FOGGIA 1 (Mandelli 65). **Att:** 42,606.

NAPOLI 1 (Cruz 22)
CAGLIARI 1 (Muzzi 34). **Att:** 29,400.

REGGIANA 1 (Simutenkov 57)
TORINO 0. **Att:** 14,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

WEEKEND

BRESCIA 0
LAZIO 1 (Boksic 27). **Att:** 11,000.

CAGLIARI 3 (Oliveira pen 7, Dely Valdes 52, Muzzi pen 65)
JUVENTUS 0. **Att:** 30,000.

FOGGIA 1 (Bucaro 51)
REGGIANA 0. **Att:** 12,100.

MILAN 2 (Desailly 78, Di Canio 84)
FIORENTINA 0. **Att:** 63,000.

PADOVA 1 (Rosa 86)
INTER 0. **Att:** 17,300.

PARMA 2 (Asprilla 3, Zola pen 50)
NAPOLI 0. **Att:** 21,500.

AS ROMA 1 (Lanna 63)
CREMONESE 1 (Chiesa 39). **Att:** 49,700.

SAMPDORIA 1 (Lombardo 79)
BARI 1 (Tovalieri 7). **Att:** 24,100.

TORINO 0
GENOA 0. **Att:** 17,500.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

MIDWEEK

TORINO 3 (Rizzitelli 6, 30, Angloma 38)
JUVENTUS 2 (Vialli 8, 33) **Att:** 50,000.

WEEKEND

JUVENTUS 2 (Del Piero 35, Vialli 89 pen)
BRESCIA 1 (Corini 10 pen). **Att:** 40,000.

CREMONESE 1 (Chiesa 70)
PARMA 1 (Zola 49 pen). **Att:** 12,000.

LAZIO 1 (Signori 92)
BARI 2 (Tovalieri 28, 58) **Att:** 47,000.

AS ROMA 1 (Balbo 1)
FOGGIA 0. **Att:** 16,000.

PADOVA 1 (Zattarin 87)
SAMPDORIA 4 (Platt 14, Evani 48, R. Mancini 68, Jugovic 75). **Att:** 14,000.

GENOA 0
MILAN 0
● *Abandoned at half-time*

CAGLIARI 2 (Muzzi 32, Herrera 91 pen)
FIORENTINA 0. **Att:** 21,000.

INTER 2 (Jonk 50, Orlandini 92 pen)
TORINO 1 (Silenzi 78). **Att:** 33,000.

REGGIANA 1 (Zanutta 91)
NAPOLI 2 (Rincon 37, Andre Cruz 74). **Att:** 13,000.

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	18	12	3	3	32	20	39
Parma	18	10	6	2	30	15	36
Lazio	18	9	4	5	37	22	31
AS Roma	18	8	7	3	23	12	31
Sampdoria	18	7	7	4	30	16	28
Milan	17	7	7	3	20	14	28
Fiorentina	18	7	6	5	31	25	27
Bari	18	8	2	8	22	25	26
Cagliari	18	6	7	5	18	18	25
Internazionale	18	6	6	6	16	15	24
Foggia	18	6	6	6	20	24	24
Torino	18	6	5	7	17	20	23
Napoli	18	4	9	5	23	29	21
Cremonese	18	5	3	10	16	22	18
Genoa	17	4	5	8	19	26	17
Padova	18	5	2	11	18	40	17
Reggiana	18	3	3	12	13	24	12
Brescia	18	1	6	11	9	27	9

PORTUGAL

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

MIDWEEK

PORTUGUESE CUP – 5TH RND

BOAVISTA 0 SPORTING 0 *(aet)*
FC PORTO 5 UNIAO LEIRIA 0
BENFICA 3 TIRSENSE 0
GUIMARAES 1 LOULETANO 2
FARENSE 3 FELGUEIRAS 1
FEIRENSE 1 SPT. BRAGA 3 *(aet)*
SETUBAL 4 TORRES NOVAS 0
OVARENSE 1 SALGUEIROS 0
MARITIMO *(bye)*

WEEKEND

ESTRELA 1 (Hubart 90)
CHAVES 1 (Miguel Correia 56). **Att:** 5,000.

SPORTING LISBON 1 (Yordanov 57)
GIL VICENTE 0. **Att:** 15,000.

SALGUEIROS 1 (Chico Fonseca 88)
BENFICA 2 (Dimas 23, Helder 33). **Att:** 2,500.

BEIRA-MAR 1 (Lepinica 27)
UNIAO MADEIRA 1 (Cabral 62). **Att:** 3,000.

BELENENSES 1 (Owubokiri 45)
GUIMARAES 2 (Pedro Barbosa 47, Tlemcani 60). **Att:** 10,000.

BOAVISTA 1 (Sanchez 21)
FC PORTO 2 (Emerson 46, Koelijkov 76). **Att:** 10,000.

TIRSENSE 2 (Rui Manuel 4, Toze 52)
UNIAO LEIRIA 1 (Abel pen 45). **Att:** 6,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

MIDWEEK

MARITIMO 0
BENFICA 3 (Kenedy 16, Isaias 25, Edilson 67). **Att:** 10,500.

WEEKEND

CHAVES 1 (Edinho 43)
SPORTING LISBON 2 (Vujacic 38, Juskowiak 57). **Att:** 7,000.

UNIAO LEIRIA 2 (Karoglan 50, Nelson Bertolazzi 63)
SPORTING BRAGA 1 (Abel 62). **Att:** 8,420.

FC PORTO 5 (Domingos 2, 20, Jose Carlos 8, Joeran 17, Aloisio pen 84)
SALGUEIROS 2 (Edmilsson 36, Miguel Simao 46). **Att:** 40,000.

BENFICA 1 (Tavares 80)
TIRSENSE 0. **Att:** 25,000.

FARENSE 1 (Hassan Nader 60)
BELENENSES 0. **Att:** 7,300.

GIL VICENTE 1 (Neves 6)
BOAVISTA 2 (Artur 75, Timofte 87). **Att:** 5,800.

MARITIMO 1 (Paulo Alves 35)
UNIAO MADEIRA 0. **Att:** 8,000.

VITORIA SETUBAL 1 (Jorge Andrade 88)
BEIR-MAR 0. **Att:** 10,000.

GUIMARAES 1 (P. Martins pen 85)
ESTRELA AMADORA 0. **Att:** 6,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

MIDWEEK

PORTUGUESE CUP – 5TH RND REPLAY

SPORTING 5 BOAVISTA 0

WEEKEND

SPORTING BRAGA 0
BENFICA 2 (Isaias 61, Caniggia 71). **Att:** 20,000.

RESULTS

European Second Division tables . . . Denmark win Intercontinental Cu

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shamrock Rov	23	11	7	5	38	23	40
Cork City	22	11	4	7	42	28	37
Derry City	22	10	7	5	28	24	37
St Patrick's Ath	23	9	9	5	39	26	36
Dundalk	23	10	6	7	24	21	36
Sligo Rovers	22	9	6	7	33	26	33
Bohemians	23	8	8	7	30	24	32
Shelbourne	22	8	7	7	25	22	32
Galway Utd	23	8	8	7	30	36	32
Cobh Ramblers	23	3	8	12	19	38	17
Athlone Town	21	2	10	9	18	27	16
Monaghan Utd	23	4	4	14	15	45	16

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	20	14	3	2	47	15	46
Galatasaray	20	14	3	3	50	19	45
Trabzonspor	20	12	5	3	42	18	41
Fenerbahce	20	12	4	4	47	21	40
Genclerbirligi	20	10	6	4	31	25	36
Bursaspor	20	10	4	6	28	19	34
Kayserispor	20	8	4	8	35	44	28
Samsunspor	20	7	6	7	36	34	27
Vanspor	20	8	2	10	23	25	26
Gaziantepspor	20	6	5	9	26	31	23
Kocaelispor	20	6	5	9	28	36	23
Denizlispor	20	6	4	10	27	35	22
Ankaragucu	20	6	4	10	25	35	22
Altay	20	4	9	7	26	31	21
Antalyaspor	20	5	5	10	20	28	20
Zeytinburnuspor	20	4	5	11	19	44	17
Petrolofisi	20	5	2	13	18	44	17
Adana Demirspor	20	3	3	14	19	44	12

WALES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bangor City	21	17	2	2	59	15	53
Cwmbran T	23	13	2	98	39	32	41
Newtown	21	11	6	4	50	27	49
Ton Pentre	19	12	3	4	44	24	39
Inter Cardiff	21	10	7	4	38	22	37
Llansantffraid	22	11	3	8	40	34	36
Afan Lido	18	10	4	4	28	21	34
Fflint T. Utd	21	10	2	9	43	37	32
Rhyl FC	22	9	4	9	43	40	31
Holywell Town	20	8	6	6	37	33	30
Barry Town	21	7	8	6	38	35	29
Caersws FC	23	8	5	10	38	39	29
Conwy United	22	9	5	9	33	37	29
Connah's Quay	21	7	6	8	31	32	27
Ebbw Vale	21	8	3	10	30	31	27
Mold Alexandra	23	8	2	13	39	52	26
Porthmadog	21	7	4	10	36	35	25
Aberystwyth T	21	1	9	11	27	47	12
Lianelli	23	3	3	17	38	81	12
Maesteg Park	22	1	4	17	14	71	7

2nd DIVISIONS

ALBANIA – Second Division

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pogradeci	8	6	0	2	12	8	12
Sopoti	8	5	1	2	29	11	11
Skenderbeu	8	4	2	2	24	10	10
Permeti	8	5	0	3	11	15	10
Rrogozhine	8	4	0	4	9	7	8
Cerriku	8	3	1	4	10	10	7
Saranda	8	2	3	3	9	11	7
Ballshi	8	2	1	5	5	19	5
Erseka	8	1	0	7	5	14	2

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kastrioti	8	5	1	1	11	4	11
Burreli	8	4	2	1	15	8	10
Kucova	8	3	2	2	13	1	8
Peshkopia	8	3	1	3	12	11	7
Lushnja	8	3	0	4	6	8	6
Durresi	8	3	0	4	7	15	6
Kukesi	8	3	0	4	8	11	6
Bresheni	8	0	2	5	3	10	2

AUSTRIA – Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grazer AK	15	9	4	2	33	10	22
VSE St Polten	15	9	3	3	33	11	21
SV Ried	15	8	5	2	25	18	21
First Wien	15	9	3	3	28	17	21
Austria Lustenau	15	7	3	5	29	16	17
SV Spittal	15	7	3	5	25	20	17
FC Kufstein	15	6	4	5	17	20	16
SV Braunau	15	6	3	6	18	24	15
WSC/Gerasdorf	15	5	4	6	16	20	14
SV Flavia Solva	15	3	8	4	12	19	14
DSV Leoben	15	4	5	6	14	14	13
SV Oberwart	15	5	3	7	20	25	13
FC Puch	15	4	4	7	21	32	12
ASK Klingenbach	15	1	9	5	6	18	11
SV Stockerau	15	1	5	9	7	27	7
Wiener Neustadt	15	1	4	10	14	37	6

BULGARIA – Second Division

B North

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dunav	15	10	4	1	24	5	34
Rakovski	15	9	4	2	22	9	31
Spartak Varna	15	9	3	3	23	12	30
Storgozia	15	9	3	3	25	15	30
Cerno More	15	8	1	6	21	16	25
Korabostroitel	15	7	3	5	26	18	24
Botev	15	7	2	6	23	18	23
Chardafon	15	7	2	6	24	17	23
Svetkavita	15	6	4	5	15	13	22
Spartak Plevna	15	6	2	7	24	18	20
Dorostol	15	4	4	7	10	20	16
Preslav	15	4	4	7	14	28	16
Lesitcheri	15	4	1	10	15	29	13
Ovech	15	4	1	10	19	36	13
Lokomotiv	15	3	2	10	13	25	11
Akad. Svishtov	15	1	4	10	11	30	7

B South

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Levski Kiustendil	15	12	1	2	34	7	37
Maritza	15	7	5	3	22	11	26
Akademik Sofia	15	7	5	3	23	16	26
Pirin	15	8	0	7	21	28	24
Haskovo	15	8	0	7	27	19	24
Cerno Morets	15	6	4	5	26	26	22
Chirpan	15	7	1	7	21	14	22
Belassitza	15	6	3	6	18	17	21
Sliven	15	7	0	8	17	22	21
Septemvri	15	5	4	6	18	18	19
Marek	15	6	1	8	17	23	19
Hebar	15	5	3	7	12	21	18
Nessebar	15	5	2	8	15	23	17
Metalik	15	4	4	7	13	14	16
Kompakt	15	4	4	7	15	21	16
Rilski Sportlist	15	2	5	8	13	33	11

DENMARK – Division II

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Viborg	18	10	6	2	48	24	26
Herfolge	18	10	5	3	48	22	25
Olstykke	18	9	5	4	37	28	23
Vejle	18	8	5	5	40	26	21
B93	18	7	6	5	17	20	20
AB	18	5	9	4	28	21	19
Hvidovre	18	8	3	7	37	32	19
Bronshoj	18	4	3	11	20	38	11
Holstebro	18	2	4	12	21	50	8
Horsens	18	1	6	11	15	50	8

ENGLAND – Endsleigh Lge

First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Middlesbrough	27	14	7	6	41	25	49
Wolves	27	14	5	8	49	34	47
Bolton	28	13	8	7	44	30	47
Tranmere	28	13	7	8	43	31	46
Reading	28	12	8	8	33	27	44
Sheff Utd	28	11	9	8	44	31	42
Grimsby	28	10	11	7	42	38	41
Barnsley	26	12	5	9	32	31	41
Derby	27	10	9	8	33	27	39
Oldham	28	10	8	10	38	36	38
Watford	27	9	11	7	28	28	38
Luton	27	10	7	10	36	34	37
Millwall	27	9	10	8	34	32	37
Southend	28	10	5	13	29	48	35
Stoke	26	9	8	9	28	31	35
West Brom	27	9	7	11	25	33	34
Charlton	27	8	9	10	41	45	33
Port Vale	26	8	7	11	32	35	31
Sunderland	27	6	13	8	27	27	31
Portsmouth	28	7	9	12	28	41	30
Swindon	26	7	8	11	34	42	29
Burnley	25	6	9	10	27	36	27
Bristol City	28	7	6	15	22	37	27
Notts County	28	6	6	16	28	39	24

FRANCE – Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guingamp	25	13	8	4	31	20	47
Marseille	24	13	7	4	45	21	46
Red Star	25	12	10	3	35	24	46
Gueugnon	25	13	6	6	33	22	45
Chateauroux	25	12	6	7	32	22	42
Nancy	24	9	13	2	28	19	40
Toulouse	25	11	7	7	38	31	40
Amiens	25	11	7	7	37	34	40
Dunkerque	25	9	12	4	21	15	39
Mulhouse	25	10	6	9	33	34	36
Ales	25	7	12	6	23	17	33
Valence	25	7	10	8	27	31	31
Le Mans	25	6	10	9	30	31	28
Charleville	25	5	13	7	20	23	28
Sedan	25	6	9	10	20	31	27
Laval	25	5	10	10	20	30	25
Angers	24	5	8	11	21	27	23
Niort	25	4	11	10	17	28	23
Perpignan	24	4	11	9	20	32	23
Saint-Brieuc	25	5	7	13	23	32	22
Beauvais	25	3	10	12	29	47	19
Nimes	25	2	9	14	23	35	15

GERMANY – 2. Bundesliga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
VfL Wolfsburg	17	9	7	1	29	14	25
FC St Pauli	17	8	7	2	29	18	23
Fort. Dusseldorf	17	9	4	4	25	15	22
Hansa Rostock	17	9	3	5	32	15	21
Wald. Mannheim	17	6	9	2	24	17	21
Hertha Berlin	17	7	6	4	21	16	20
SV Meppen	17	7	5	5	25	22	19
FC Homburg	17	6	5	6	28	27	17
FSV Mainz	17	5	7	5	29	29	17
Wattenscheid	17	5	7	5	28	29	17
FSV Zwickau	17	3	10	4	21	22	16
Chemnitzer FC	17	4	8	5	19	28	16
Saarbrucken	17	4	7	6	21	24	15
FC Nurnberg	17	4	7	6	21	30	15
Fortuna Koln	17	4	6	7	23	22	14
Hannover '96	17	5	4	8	25	29	14
VfB Leipzig	17	5	1	11	21	29	11
FSV Frankfurt	17	0	3	14	17	52	3

GREECE – Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paniliakos	16	10	5	1	39	20	35
Kalamata	17	9	6	2	27	12	33
Panachaiki	17	10	3	4	28	15	33
Panargiakos	17	8	4	5	28	20	27
Ialisos	17	6	8	3	21	15	26
Yiannina	16	7	4	5	14	17	25
Karditsa	17	1	3	7	26	28	24
Kolindros	16	7	2	7	25	23	23
Kalamaria	17	6	5	6	29	24	23
Korinthos	17	6	4	7	26	26	22
Proodeftiki	16	6	3	7	22	22	21
Naousa	16	5	4	7	23	26	19
Veria	16	5	2	9	17	29	17
Pondi Veria	16	5	2	9	16	27	17
Enosi A.R.	16	5	1	10	20	27	16
Panserraikos	16	4	6	6	19	27	16
Haravgiakos	17	4	4	9	14	22	16
Pierikos	16	3	6	7	16	19	15

HOLLAND – Eerste Divisie

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fortuna Sittard	18	12	3	3	41	16	27
Den Haag	18	10	2	6	38	25	22
Excelsior	18	9	4	5	36	27	22
Cambuur	18	8	6	4	27	21	22
De Graafschap	18	9	4	5	34	30	22
Heracles	18	9	3	6	36	23	21
Veendam	18	9	3	6	33	25	21
TOP Oss	18	8	5	5	28	21	21
AZ	18	6	6	6	28	23	18
VVV	18	7	4	7	35	31	18
RBC	18	8	2	8	28	27	18
FC Zwolle	18	6	5	7	25	32	17
Helmond Sport	17	7	2	8	32	39	16
Haarlem	18	6	4	8	32	37	16
Telstar	18	5	5	8	26	36	15
Emmen	17	3	8	6	24	32	14
Den Bosch	18	1	4	13	20	49	6
Eindhoven	18	2	2	14	15	44	6

HUNGARY – Second Division

East Section

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MTK	15	12	2	1	29	4	38
SBTC	15	10	2	3	34	16	32
Kabai Cukor	15	8	4	3	22	14	28
Kazincbarcika	15	8	2	5	28	24	26
Nyiregyhaza	15	6	4	5	17	20	22
Tiszakecske	15	5	6	4	22	14	21
Balmazujvaros	15	6	3	6	28	26	21
III. Ker. TVE	15	5	5	5	19	17	20
Diosgyon FC	15	4	8	3	18	16	20
Szarvas	15	5	4	6	17	19	19
Godollo-Verzal	15	4	6	5	17	20	18
Hajdunanas	15	5	3	7	9	14	18
Mezovasarhely	15	4	4	7	19	24	16
Hatvan	15	3	5	7	17	24	14
Tiszavasvari	15	1	5	9	16	36	8
Miskolci VSC	15	2	1	12	12	36	7

Western Section

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BKV Elore	15	9	3	3	27	18	30
Siofok	15	8	4	3	27	13	28
Szazhalombatta	15	8	4	3	26	22	28
Mohacs	15	8	3	4	23	14	27
Budafoki LC	15	7	4	4	22	20	25
Haladas VSE	15	8	0	7	29	21	24
Veszprem	15	6	6	3	16	9	24
Keszthely	15	6	5	4	26	19	23
Baja	15	6	4	5	24	29	22
Paks	15	6	3	6	19	20	21
Dunaferr	15	4	7	4	10	8	19
ESMTK	15	5	1	9	12	27	16
Tatabanya	15	4	2	9	14	21	14
Matav SC	15	4	2	9	20	28	14
Beremend	15	4	1	10	20	28	13
Pecsi VS	15	1	3	11	8	26	6

ISRAEL – Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maccabi Jaffa	15	10	4	1	24	9	34
Hap. Ashdod	15	7	4	4	28	18	25
Hak. Ramat Gan	15	7	4	4	23	18	25
Ness Ziona	15	7	3	5	25	21	24
Mac. Kiryat Gat	15	6	4	5	26	20	22
Hap.Kfar Sava	15	5	6	4	28	20	21
Hap.Hadera	15	5	5	5	22	17	20
Hap. Jerusalem	15	5	5	5	26	25	20
Mac.Yavne	15	5	5	5	18	18	20
Hap. Bat Yam	15	4	6	5	21	21	18
Hap.Taibe	15	4	6	5	13	16	18
Hap.Ramat Gan	15	4	5	6	18	23	17
Hapoel Lod	15	4	5	6	15	27	17
Hap.Ashkelon	15	4	4	7	19	29	16
Kiryat Shmona	15	3	5	7	12	25	14
Shimshon TA	15	2	5	8	10	21	11

ITALY – Serie B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Piacenza	20	9	10	1	27	12	37
Udinese	20	8	9	3	33	19	33
Ancona	20	8	6	6	30	25	30
Fidelis Andria	20	7	9	4	22	17	30
Verona	20	6	11	3	21	17	29
Perugia	20	6	11	3	15	11	29
Salernitana	20	7	7	6	29	23	28
Vicenza	20	5	13	2	13	9	28
Cesena	20	6	9	5	21	17	27
Lucchese	20	6	9	5	28	25	27
Venezia	20	7	5	8	20	20	26
Atalanta	20	5	11	4	17	18	26
Palermo	20	5	10	5	19	11	25
Acireale	20	5	7	8	11	20	22
Pescara	20	5	6	9	19	31	21
Chievo	20	4	8	8	18	20	20
Cosenza	20	6	10	4	19	18	19
Ascoli	20	3	8	9	13	24	17
Como	20	3	7	10	8	29	16
Lecce	20	2	8	10	13	30	14

NORTHERN IRELAND – Irish League, B Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dungannon	18	12	3	3	47	24	39
Loughgall	17	11	3	3	42	16	36
Dundela	20	10	5	5	49	30	35
Banbridge T	19	8	9	2	40	26	33
Ballymoney U	20	10	2	8	36	45	32
RUC	17	9	4	4	27	20	31
Armagh City	19	9	2	8	49	44	29
Brantwood	18	7	5	6	35	35	26
Limavady Utd	16	7	4	5	32	20	25
Moyola Park	17	6	6	5	25	24	24
Chimney Corner	20	4	9	7	30	29	21
Harland & Wolff	15	4	5	6	21	31	17
Tobermore Utd	18	4	4	10	19	41	16
Ballinamallard	18	4	3	11	25	38	15
Cookstown Utd	17	4	2	11	21	35	14
Queen's Univ	19	1	2	16	11	54	5

NORWAY – Division II

Section A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Strindheim	22	14	4	4	59	23	46
Stabekk	22	13	3	6	43	32	42
Drobak/Frogn	22	11	5	6	39	25	38
Nardo	22	11	5	6	32	33	38
Lyn Oslo	22	10	4	8	35	24	34
Skeid Oslo	22	9	5	8	50	45	32
Moss	22	8	5	9	40	38	29
Alta	22	8	3	11	31	37	27
Tromsdalen	22	8	2	12	41	49	26
Mjolner	22	7	5	10	32	43	26
Stjordal/Blink	22	6	4	12	31	45	22

Section B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hodd	22	14	4	4	52	22	46
Molde	22	13	3	6	44	25	42
Fyllingen	22	12	5	5	45	25	41
Eik-Tonsberg	22	10	5	7	40	30	35
Bryne	22	8	6	8	36	36	30
Fana	22	8	6	8	30	34	30
Jevnaker	22	9	2	11	41	42	29
Aasane	22	8	4	10	34	48	28
Vard	22	8	3	11	19	25	27
Andalsnes	22	7	4	11	26	36	25
Vidar	22	5	5	12	24	46	20
Mjondalen	22	4	5	13	24	46	17

MALTA – Division 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mellieha	9	6	2	1	17	7	20
St Patrick's	9	6	1	2	19	6	19
Rabat Ajax	9	4	1	2	19	6	16
Dingli Swallows	8	5	1	2	11	7	16
Mostar	9	5	0	4	12	9	15
Gzira United	9	4	2	3	16	14	14
Tarxien Rainbows	8	2	3	3	10	12	9
Marsa	9	1	2	6	10	22	5
Mqabba	9	1	2	6	7	20	5
Vittoriosa Stars	9	1	1	7	9	22	4

POLAND – Second League

First Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slask Wroclaw	17	11	4	2	39	9	26
Amica Wronki	17	10	6	1	22	8	26
Zaw. Bydgoszcz	17	10	5	2	27	15	25
Wisla Krakow	17	6	8	3	26	18	20
Rydultowy	17	7	6	4	19	16	20
Polonia Bytom	17	8	3	6	24	17	19
Dzierzoniow	17	6	5	6	20	18	17
Miedz Legnica	17	6	5	6	12	12	17
Odra Wodzislaw	17	6	5	6	19	20	17
Stilton Gorzow	17	5	7	5	12	14	17
Sleza Wroclaw	17	4	8	5	22	15	16
Kristbut Myszkow	17	4	6	7	19	19	14
Chrobry Glogow	17	4	6	7	19	20	14
Lechia Gdansk	17	5	3	9	16	28	13
Arka Gdynia	17	4	4	9	7	23	12
Gornik Konin	17	3	6	8	11	30	12
Baltyk Gdynia	17	2	7	8	13	27	11
Pogon Olesnica	17	4	2	11	10	29	10

Second Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S. Tarnobrzeg	17	10	6	1	26	10	26
GKS Belchatow	17	9	6	2	28	9	24
FC Piaseczno	17	7	6	2	25	17	22
Hetman Zamosc	17	7	7	3	22	10	21
Polonia Warsaw	17	7	7	3	19	11	21
Unia Tarnow	17	6	6	5	29	18	18
Lublinianka	17	5	8	4	27	27	18
Avia Swidnik	17	6	5	6	17	15	17
Pom. Malbork	17	6	5	6	16	22	17
Szom. Bytom	17	6	4	7	23	24	16
Ok. Brzesko	17	5	6	6	19	20	16
Jagiellonia	17	5	6	6	16	22	16
Motor Lublin	17	5	5	7	19	16	15
Radomiak Radom	17	5	5	7	20	22	15
Hutnik Warsaw	17	5	5	7	22	25	15
Wisloka Debica	17	3	6	8	16	27	12
Blekitni Kielce	17	2	6	9	14	38	10
Karpaty Krosno	17	2	3	12	6	30	7

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND – First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Drogheda Utd	17	11	3	3	35	18	36
UCD	16	11	2	3	33	11	35
Finn Harps	16	7	5	4	33	20	26
Waterford Utd	16	7	5	4	16	11	26
Home Farm	17	7	4	6	29	28	25
Longford Town	16	6	5	5	18	21	23
Bray Wanderers	16	6	3	7	19	17	21
Limerick	16	4	7	5	15	18	19
St James's Gate	16	2	6	8	20	29	12
Kilkenny City	16	0	0	16	12	57	0

RUSSIA – Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chernomorets	42	29	7	6	103	31	65
Rostselmash	42	27	8	7	92	44	62
Baltika	42	26	10	6	89	41	62
Sokol	42	21	11	10	65	48	53
Shinnik Yaroslavl	42	21	8	13	69	44	50
Neftekhimik	42	18	11	13	56	40	47

INTERNATIONAL

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29

Dec 29 = Bamako – friendly
MALI 0
MAURITANIA 0
Att: 4,000.

MONDAY, JANUARY 2

Jan 2 = Sousse – friendly
TUNISIA 2 (Chihi 28, Beya 35)
EGYPT 0
HT: 0-2. Att: 15,000. Ref: Boukhir (Lib).
Tunisia: El Ouaer (Salhi 46) – Thabet (M Trabelsi 74), Berrekhissa (Nouira 74), S Jaballah, S Trabelsi – Mahjoubi, Fekhi, Chihi, Beya – F Roussi (S Bouhali 66), A Hamrouni (Bechaouch 66).
Egypt: Abdelhadin – Nagia, I Hassan, H Ramzy, F Gamal – M Ryad, W Salaheddine, H Kashaba (A Rifaat 25), El Ajouz (El Kas 46) – Sary, H Hassan (Abugreisha 58).

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

Jan 4 = Ho Chi Minh City – friendly
VIETNAM 1 (Le Huynh Duc 66)
ESTONIA 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 12,060.
Estonia: Vessenberg – T Kallaste, Lemsalu, Kiisman (Lindmae 46), Alonen – Olumets (Hohlav-Simson 57), R Kallaste, Reim, Kristal – Linnumae, Kirs.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

Jan 6 = Riyadh – Intercontinental Cup gp B
JAPAN 0
NIGERIA 3 (Siasia 5, Adepoju 54, Amokachi 64)
HT: 0-1. Att: 22,000. Ref: Craciunescu (Rom).
Japan: Matsunaga – Natsuka, Ihara, T. Hashiratani, Yamaguchi, Horiike, Kitazawa (Fukuda 73), Yamaguchi, Ramos (Isogai 46), Miura.
Nigeria: Rufai – Eguavoen, Iroha, Okechukwu, Okafor, Adepoju, Oliseh, Siasia (Momodu 83), Amunike, Ekoku (Okocha 62), Amokachi.

Jan 6 = Riyadh – Intercontinental Cup gp A
SAUDI ARABIA 0
MEXICO 2 (Luis Garcia 65, 82)
HT: 0-0. Att: 22,000. Ref: S. Imperatore (Chile)
S Arabia: Al-Sadik – Al-Khilaiwi, Souliman, Jameel, Eesa, Amin (Mehalel 68), Al-Saleh, Al-Muwallid, Al-Dawod (Hamzah Saleh 60), Owairan, Al-Jabar.
Mexico: Campos – Suarez, Bernal, Del Olmo, Gutierrez, Ambriz, Ramon Ramirez, Garcia Aspe, J. Rodriquez, Hermosillo (Luis Garcia 46), Alves.

Jan 6= Omdurman – Af Chp gp 4
SUDAN 3 (Riyadh 5, Nimeri 35, Abrahoma 80)
UGANDA 1 (Musisi 22)
HT: 2-1. Att: 8,000.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

Jan 7 = Ziguinchor – Afr Chp gp 2
SENEGAL 0
TUNISIA 0
Att: 12,000.

Jan 7 = Freetown – Afr Chp gp 3
SIERRA LEONE 2 (Ibrahim Koroma 50, Musa Kanu 53)
GAMBIA 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 30,000.

Jan 7 = Luanda – Af Chp gp 6
ANGOLA 1 (Tubia 19)
MOZAMBIQUE 0
HT: 1-0.

Jan 7 = Gaborone – Af Chp gp 6
BOTSWANA 1
MALI 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

Jan 8 = Algiers – Afr Chp gp 4
ALGERIA 1 (Dziri 16pen)
EGYPT 0
HT: 1-0. Att: 60,000. Ref: Ndaye (Sen)
Algeria: Hamened – Belatoui, Benhamlat, Amrouche, Lazizi – Cherif El Ouazani, Zdiri, Saib, Matemn – Menad, Kaci Said
Egypt: H El Saed – I Hassan, Hadidi, H Ramzy, F Gamal – Kashaba, Ahmed Naaman, Rifaat Antar, El Kas – W Salaheddine, H Hassan.

Jan 8 = Yaounde – Afr Chp gp 1
CAMEROON 0
MALAWI 0
Att: 35,000.

Jan 8 = Brazzaville – Afr Chp gp 3
CONGO 3 (Guillaume Ibara 1, 74, Emboula 50)
NIGER 1 (Hassan Moussa 29)
HT: 1-1. Att: 10,000.

Jan 8 = Addis Ababa – Afr Chp gp4
ETHIOPIA 1 (Elias Juhar 33)
TANZANIA 0
HT: 1-0. Att: 33,000.

Jan 8 = Lome – Afr Chp gp 2
TOGO 0
MAURITANIA 0
Att: 8,000.

Jan 8 = Kinshasa – Af Chp gp 1
ZAIRE 3 (Lukaku 1pen, Mukanya 37, Mbiyavanga 82)
LESOTHO 0
HT: 2-0.

Jan 8 = Conakry – Af Chp gp 6
GUINEA 3 (Ab Camara 62, Sow 69, Moh Sylla 88)
NAMIBIA 0
HT: 0-0.

Jan 8 = Riyadh – Intercon Cup gp B
ARGENTINA 5 (Rambert 32, Ortega 44, Batistuta 47, 86pen, Chamot 54)
JAPAN 1 (K Miura 57)
HT: 2-0. Att: 5,000. Ref: Rodrigo Badilla (CR).
Argentina: Bossio – Zanetti, Ayala, Fabbri, Chamot, Escudero (Lopez 55), Perez, Bassedas, Ortega (Gallardo 67), Batistuta, Rambert.
Japan: Matsunaga – Natsuka, Ihara, Tsunami, T. Hashiratani, Horiike (Yanagimoto 62), Isogai, Yamaguchi, Fukuda, Yamaguchi (Kitazawa 51), Miura.

Jan 8 = Riyadh – Intercon Cup gp A
SAUDI ARABIA 0
DENMARK 2 (B Laudrup 43, Weighorst 89)
HT: 0-1. Att: 5,000. Ref: Lim-Kee Chong (Mauritius).
S Arabia: Al-Sadiq – Al-Khilaiwi, Souliman, Jameel, Eesa, Amin, Al Saleh, Owairan, Al-Jaber (Al-Dossary 87), Al-Ghisheyan, Mehalel (Korshi 46).
Denmark: Hogh – Rieper, Hogh, Risager, Laursen, Rasmussen (Weighorst 78), Schoenberg, Steen Nielsen, Kristensen, B. Laudrup, Strudal (Hansen 46).

MONDAY, JANUARY 9

Jan 9 = Port-Louis – Af Chp gp 5
MAURITIUS 0
ZAMBIA 3 (K Bwalya 32, 87, Johnson Bwalya 76)
HT: 0-1. Att: 4,000.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

Jan 10 = Riyadh – Intercon Cup gp A
DENMARK 1 (Rasmussen 88)
MEXICO 1 (Luis Garcia 70)
HT: 0-0. Att: 35,000. Ref: Imperatore (Chi)
Denmark won 4-2 on pens
Denmark: L Hogh (Krogh) – Risager (M Schjonberg), Rieper, Friis Hansen, J Hogh – Steen Nielsen, J Kristensen, Hemmingsen (J Laursen), M Laudrup – P Rasmussen, B Laudrup.
Mexico: Campos – Rodriguez, Suarez, Gutierrez, Del Olmo – Bernal, Ambriz, Ramirez, Garcia Aspe (Coyote) – Luis Garcia, Alves Zague (Hermosillo).

GROUP A – FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	APts
DENMARK	2	1	1	0	3	1 3
MEXICO	2	1	1	0	3	1 3
SAUDI ARABIA	2	0	0	2	0	4 0

Jan 10 = Riyadh – Intercon Cup gp B
ARGENTINA 0
NIGERIA 0
Att: 35,000. Ref: Bujsaim (UAE).
Argentina: Bossio – Zanetti, Fabbri, Ayala, Chamot – H Perez, Escudero, Bassedas, Ortega – Rambert, Batistuta.
Nigeria: Rufai – Eguavoen, Okafor, Okechukwu, Iroha – Adepoju, Okocha (Pam J), Siasia – Ekoku (Mutaru), Amokachi, Amunike.

GROUP B – FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	APts
ARGENTINA	2	1	1	0	5	1 3
NIGERIA	2	1	1	0	3	0 3
JAPAN	2	0	0	2	1	8 0

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

Jan 13 = Riyadh – Intercon Cup 3rd place play-off
MEXICO 1 (R Ramirez 20)
NIGERIA 1 (Amokachi 31)
HT: 1-1. Att: 25,000. Ref: Craciunescu (Rom)
Mexico won 5-4 on pens
Mexico: Campos – R Gutierrez, Ambriz (Galindo), C Suarez, Del Olmo – Bernal, Rodriguez, R Ramirez, Garcia Aspe – Luis Garcia, Hermosillo.
Nigeria: Rufai – Eguavoen, Iroha, Okechukwu, Okafor – Adepoju, Okocha (Pam J'), Siasia – Amunike, Iorfa (Imenger), Amokachi.

Jan 13 = Riyadh – Intercon Cup Final
DENMARK 2 (M Laudrup 8 pen, P Rasmussen 74)
ARGENTINA 0
HT: 1-0. Att: 25,000. Ref: Bujsaim (UAE)
Denmark: Krogh – Rieper, J Hogh, Friis Hansen, Laursen (Risager), Schjonberg – Steen Nielsen, Kristensen, M Laudrup (Wieghorst) – P Ramussen, B Laudrup.
Argentina: Bossio – Zanetti, Fabbri, Ayala, Chamot – Jimenez (Lopez), Bassedas, Escudero, Ortega – Rambert (Espina), Batistuta.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

Jan 15 = Bouake – friendly
IVORY COAST 0
TOGO 0
Att: 2,000.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

Jan 18 = Utrecht – friendly
HOLLAND 0
FRANCE 1 (Loko 45)
HT: 0-1. Att: 12,400. Ref: Piraux (Bel).
Holland: De Goey – Valckx, Blind (Reiziger 46), F De Boer – Winter, Jonk, Seedorf, Numan (Davids 76) – Overmars (Van Vossen 63) – Mols (Van Hooijdonk 56), Helder.
France: Lama – Karembeu (Thuram 87), Di Meco, Ferri, Blanc, Le Guen (Angloma 61), Pedros, Loko, Desailly – Papin (Ouedec 66), Cantona.

Jan 18 = La Coruna – friendly
SPAIN 2 (Juan Pizzi 1, Donato 81)
URUGUAY 2 (Daniel Fonseca 18, Pablo Bengoechea 34)
HT: 1-2. Att: 22,000. Ref: Uzunov (Bul)
Spain: Zubizarreta (Canizares 46) – Belsue, Alkorta, Abelardo, Sergi – Donato, Hierro, J Guerrero (Nadal 46), Fran – Goikoetxea (Luis Enrique 46), Pizzi (Losada 46).
Uruguay: Arbiza – Aguirregaray, N Gutierrez (Tais 46), Montero (D Silva 46), Alzueta – Dorta, Bengechea (Otero 85), Moas, Poyet – Francescoli (Recoba 65), D Fonseca.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21

Jan 21 = Dar es Salaam – Af Chp gp 4
TANZANIA 2 (Juma Bakari Kidishi 37, Madaraka Selemani 66)
ALGERIA 1 (Keci Said Kamel 13)
HT: 1-1. Att: 20,000.

Jan 21 = Kampala – Af Chp gp 4
UGANDA 0
EGYPT 0
Att: 10,000.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22

Jan 22 = Maseru – Af Chp gp 1
MALAWI 2 (Lovemore Chafunya 62, Hendrix Banda 64)
LESOTHO 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 10,000.

Jan 22 = Harare – Af Chp gp 1
ZIMBABWE 4 (Vitalis Takawira 12, 50, 88, Paul Gundani 47)
CAMEROON 1 (Agdo 83)
HT: 1-0. Att: 25,000.

Jan 22 = Monrovia – Af Chp gp 2
LIBERIA 1 (Jonathan Sogbie 22pen)
SENEGAL 1 (Souleymane Sane 83)
HT: 1-0. Att: 45,000.

Jan 22 = Niamey – Af Chp gp 3
NIGER 1 (Halidou 70)
GAMBIA 1 (Ba Drame 17)
HT: 0-1. Att: 10,000.

Jan 22 = Accra – Af Chp gp 3
GHANA 3 (Augustine Arhinful 39, Jean de Dieu Soumou Mbele og 69, Kwame Ayew 70)
CONGO 1 (Oba Swing 80)
HT: 1-0. Att: 50,000.

Jan 22 = Addis Ababa – Af Chp gp 4
ETHIOPIA 2 (Kebede 3, Ashenawi 61)
SUDAN 0
Att: 8,000.

Jan 22= Gaborone – Af Chp gp 6
BOTSWANA 1 (Paul 44)
ANGOLA 2 (Paulao 55, 63)
HT: 1-0. Att: 10,000.

Jan 22 = Maputo – Af Chp gp 6
MOZAMBIQUE 4 (Nuro 6, 30, 90, Eurico 68)
NAMIBIA 2 (Sylvanus 36, Paul 85)
HT: 2-1. Att: 22,000.

Jan 22 = Abidjan – Af Chp gp 7
IVORY COAST 2 (Joel Tiehi 7, 43)
BURKINA FASO 2 (Sidi Nafou 50, Seydou Traore 80)
HT: 2-0. Att: 20,000.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

Jan 24 = Abu Dhabi – friendly
UAE 1 (Hassan Said 40)
JAPAN 1 (Yumura 25)
HT: 1-1. Att: 5,000.

Jan 24 = Toronto – Skydome Tmt
CANADA 0
DENMARK 1 (L Hoyer-Nielsen 52)
HT: 0-0. Att: 14,000. Ref: Z Boulos (US)
Canada: Forrest – Fraser, Samuel, M Watson, Yallop – Anger, Hooper (Dasovic 58), C Miller, Corrazzin – Alex Bunbury (E Berdusco 87), Peschosolid.
Denmark: Krogh – Bjerre, J Hogh, Laursen, Boye – J Kristensen, H LArsen, Bo Hansen (Frandsen 83), E Bo Anderson (Johansson 46) – Hoyer Nielsen, P Rasmussen.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

Jan 25 = Larnaca – friendly
CYPRUS 2 (Gogic 9, Kalitzakias og 27)
GREECE 3 (Georgiadis 35, Frantzeskos 71m, Vryzas 83)
HT: 2-1. Att: 2,000. Ref: Georgiou (Cyp)
Cyprus: Panayiotu (Petridis 46) – Kaiotheu (Larku 46), Christodolu, Andreu (Sakis 46), Pittas (Hadjilukas 67) – Konstantinu, Costa, Ch Charalambous (Fasouliotis 44), Gogic (Savides 63) – Sotiriou (Ilia 70), Malekos.
Greece: Mihopoulos (Atmatzidis 46) – Apostolakis, Vlahos (Pavlopulos 46), Georgiadis (Pursanidis 46), Kalitzakis (Dabozas 46) – Tsaluhidis, Zagorakias (Sakalaridis 46), Nioplias (Maragos 46), Tursunidis (Tsartas 46) – Machlas (Vryzas 67), Alexandris (Frantzeskos 46).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

Jan 26 = Toronto – Skydome Tmt
CANADA 1 (Bunbury 82)
PORTUGAL 1 (Folha 10)
HT: 0-1. Att: 13,658. Ref: Z Boulos (US)
Canada: Onstad – Doliscat (Mclean 46), Samuel, M Watson, Fraser (Carter 88) – Anger, Aguiar, Dasovic, Corazzin (E Berdusco 67) – Peschosolido, Bunbury.
Portugal: Neno – Rui Bento, Secretario, Jorge Costa, Paulo Madeira – Nelo, Caetano (Alves 62), Vado (Calado 62), Pedro Barbosa – Folha, Sa Pinto (Barroso 89).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

Jan 29 = Tunis – Af Chp gp 2
TUNISIA 1 (Mahjoubi 67)
MAURITANIA 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 4,000.

Jan 29 = Toronto – Skydome Tmt
PORTUGAL 1 (Paulo Alves 89)
DENMARK 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 23,700. Ref: M T Camacho (Can)
Portugal: Alfredo – Rui Bento (Tulipa 70), Secretario, Jorge Costa, Paulo Madeira – Nelo, Calado, Vado (Sa Pinto 56), Pedro Barbosa – Folha (Caetano 78), Paulo Alves.
Denmark: Krogh – Bjerre, J Hogh, Laursen, Boye (Tur 32) – H Larsen, E Bo Andersen (Fredriksen 70), Bo Hansen, Christensen (Frandsen 46) – I Hoyer Nielsen, P Rasmussen.
● *Portugal won tournament.*

EUROPEAN SUPERCUP

Feb 1 = London, Highbury – 1st leg
ARSENAL 0
MILAN 0
Att: 38,041. Ref: Van der Ende (Hol).
Arsenal: Seaman – Dixon, Winterburn, Schwarz, Bould, Adams, Jensen (Hillier 85), Wright, Hartson, Selley, Campbell (Merson 74).
Milan: Rossi – Tassotti, Maldini, Albertini, Costacurta, Baresi, Donadoni, Desailly, Simone, Savicevic (Di Canio 89), Massaro.

MASPALOMAS INT'L TOURNAMENT

SEMI-FINALS
RODA JC 4 (Babangida 46, 58, Van Galen 50, Huiberts 88)
BRONDBY 2 (Nielsen 30, Schram 61 pen)
IFK GOTHENBURG 1 (Martinsson 76 pen)
STURM GRAZ 0

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF
STURM GRAZ 4 (Haas 11, 86, 90, Prilasnig 51)
BRONDBY 2 (Fuhr 7, Povlsen 57)

FINAL
RODA JC 2 (Huiberts 62, Graf 81)
IFK GOTHENBURG 0

EURO DRAWS

CHAMPIONS CUP
(March 1 & 15)
Barcelona v Paris Saint Germain
Bayern Munich v IFK Gothenburg
Hajduk Split v Ajax Amsterdam
Milan *(holders)* v Benfica

CUP-WINNERS CUP
(March 2 & 16)
Arsenal v Auxerre
Feyenoord v Zaragoza
Sampdoria v FC Porto
Club Brugge v Chelsea*
* *= Feb 28 & Mar 14*

UEFA CUP
(Feb 28 & Mar 14)
Bayer Leverkusen v Nantes
Eintracht Frankfurt v Juventus
Lazio v Borussia Dortmund
Parma v OB Odense

SOUTH AMERICA

INTERNATIONALS

December 15 in Mexico City, friendly
MEXICO 5 (Hermosillo 2, Suarez, R. Ramirez, Galindo pen)
HUNGARY 1 (Klause)
HT: 3-1.

Dec 21 in Buenos Aires, friendly
ARGENTINA 1 (Perez)
ROMANIA 0
HT: 0-0. Ref: Ivan Guerrero (Chi).
Argentina: Bossio, Zanetti, Ayala, Fabbri, Arruabarrena, Escudero (J. Flores), Perez, Bassedas, Espina (Lopez), Ortega (Gallardo), Rambert.
Romania: Prunea, Zegrean (Lutu), Papoura, Popescu, Chirita, Matei, Cristescu, Viaddiu (Turt), Craioveanu (Cirstera), Stinga, Stefan.

Dec 23 in Porto Alegre, friendly
BRAZIL 2 (Viola, Branco)
YUGOSLAVIA 0
HT: 1-0.
Brazil: Zetti, Jorginho, Aldair, Marcio Santos, Branco, Cesar Sampaio, Dunga, Zinho, Marques (Savio), Viola, Ronaldo (Marcelinho Pereira).
Yugoslavia: Pandurovic (Kocic), Komljenovic (Saula), Djukic, Dubajic (Djorovic), Brnovic, Jokanovic (Govedarica), Jugovic, Stojkovic, Minajlovic, Mijatovic (Milosevic), Savicevic.

CONMEBOL CUP

Semi-finals – 1st leg: Penarol (Uru) 2 Universidad de Chile 0 *(Nov 29)*; Sao Paulo (Bra) 4 Corinthians (Bra) 3 *(Dec 2)*.
Semi-finals – 2nd leg: Universidad de Chile 1 Penarol 1 – *Penarol win 3-1 on aggregate (Dec. 8)*; Corinthians 3 Sao Paulo 2 – *aggregate 6-6, Sao Paulo won 5-4 on pens*
Dec 14 = Final, 1st leg – Sao Paulo
SAO PAULO (Bra) 6 (Cao 2, Cate 3, Toninho)
PENAROL (Uru) 1 (Agulera)
HT: 1-1. Ref: Ivan Guerrero (Chi).
Sao Paulo: Rogerio, Bordon, Nelson, Ronaldo Luis, Pavao, Mona, Pereira, Denilson, Cate, Caio, Toninho.
Penarol: Ferro, Tais, Aguirregaray, De los Santos, Roberto Lima, Martinez, Dorta, Bengoechea, Aguilera, Otero, Silva.
Dec. 21 – Final, 2nd leg – Montevideo.
PENAROL 3 (Rodriguez 2, Silva)
SAO PAULO 0
HT: 0-0. Ref: Javier Castrilli (Arg).
Sao Paulo won 6-4 on agg
Penarol: Ferro, Tais, Aguirregaray, De los Santos, Romero, Pacheco, Dorta, Bengnechea, Rodriquez, Otero, Silva.
Sao Paulo: Rogerio, Victor, Nelson, Bordon, Ronaldo Luiz, Pavao, Pereira, Mona, De Nilson, Caoi, Juninho.

CONCACAF CUP-WINNERS TOURNAMENT

(in Miami)
Dec 2 – Semi-finals: Necaxa (Mex) 4 Lambada (Bar) 1. Aurora (Guat) 2 Real Maya (Hond) 1.
Dec 4 – 3rd play play-off: Real Maya 1 Lambada 0.
Dec 4 – Final
NECAXA (Mex) 3 (Aguinaga 2, Pelaez)
AURORA (Guat) 0
HT: 2-0.
Necaxa: Navarro, Higareda, Vilches, Becerril, Herrera, Sol (Alvarado), Esquivel, Aguinaga, Pelaez, Basay, Hernandez (Garcia Aspe).
Aurora: Estrada, Villavencio, Davila, Espel, Montepeque, Bernardez, Giron, Jimenez, Calix (Guavara) Rochez, Westphal.

U-20 INTERNATIONAL

Dec 22: Chile 1 Argentina 2.

MAJOR CLUB INTERNATIONALS

Dec 20: Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 0 Juventus (Ita) 2.
Dec 22: San Lorenzo (Arg) 2 Juventus (Ita) 2 *(Juventus won 3-1 on pen)*

WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP

(in Argentina)
Dec 4 – Final: Argentina 2 Colombia 1 (aet). ***3rd place:*** Uruguay 1 Brazil 0.

FAST FOOTBALL INTERNATIONAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

(in Pachuca, Mexico)
Dec 18 – Final: Mexico 6 US 1. ***3rd place:*** Brazil 4 Argentina 3.

PAN AMERICAN GAMES – *QUALIFYING*

CENTRAL AMERICAN ZONE

07.12.94	Costa Rica v El Salvador	2-1
07.12.94	Honduras v Guatemala	2-0
16.12.94	El Salvador v Honduras	1-1
16.12.94	Guatemala v Costa Rica	2-0
21.12.94	Costa Rica v Honduras	2-2
21.12.94	El Salvador v Guatemala	1-0
30.12.94	El Salvador v Costa Rica	1-3
30.12.94	Guatemala v Honduras	0-0
08.01.95	Honduras v El Salvador	4-0
08.01.95	Costa Rica v Guatemala	2-2
15.01.95	Guatemala v El Salvador	3-1
15.01.95	Honduras v Costa Rica	0-2

	P	W	D	L	A	F	Pts
COSTA RICA	6	3	2	1	11	8	11
HONDURAS	6	2	3	1	9	5	9
GUATEMALA	6	2	2	2	7	6	8
EL SALVADOR	6	1	1	4	5	13	4

● *Costa Rica & Honduras qualify for the 1995 PanAm Games*

CONMEBOL ZONE
Dec 2: Venezuela 2 Colombia 3
Dec 16: Colombia 3 Venezuela 0
Colombia won 6-2 on agg

ECUADOR

FIRST DIVISION
Final round – final standings
1) Emelec 14pts; 2) Nacional 13.5; 3) Barcelona 12; 4) Deportivo Quito 9; 5) Espoli, Aucas 8. (Includes bonus points – top two in Libertadores Cup.)

ARGENTINA
NATIONAL A DIVISION
Opening Championship – final standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	19	12	7	0	31	14	31
San Lorenzo	19	9	8	2	30	21	26
Velez Sarsfield	19	9	6	4	28	16	24
Newell's OB	19	7	9	3	22	14	23
Argentinos Jun.	19	8	6	5	24	19	22
Belgrano	19	7	7	5	25	18	21
Lanus	19	7	7	5	20	24	21
Banfield	19	7	6	6	20	15	20
Rosario Central	19	7	6	6	22	20	20
Gimn. La Plata	19	5	10	4	20	19	20
Independiente	19	7	5	7	29	28	19
Racing Club	19	6	7	6	15	18	19
Boca Juniors	19	5	7	7	29	28	17
Platense	19	5	6	8	19	24	16
Huracan	19	6	4	9	22	25	16
FC Oeste	19	5	6	8	21	30	16
Gimnasia Jujuy	19	6	3	10	13	24	15
Dep. Espanol	19	3	6	10	13	24	12
Dep. Mandiyu	19	1	9	9	19	31	11
Talleres*	19	2	7	10	18	29	9

* *forfeit 2pts*

Relegation averages bottom standings (average points over last three seasons – bottom two relegated after closing championship): Dep. Espanol 0,894; Newell's OB 0,863; Platense 0,863; Mandiyu 0,821; Gimnasia Jujuy 0,789; Talleres 0,473.

URUGUAY
LIQUILLA *(for Libertadores Cup places – final)*
After 5 games: 1) Penarol 10pts; 2) Defensor, Cerro 6; 4) Sud America 4, 5) Nacional 3; 6) River Plate 1.
(Top two in Libertadores Cup – Cerro beat Defensor in play-off)

COLOMBIA
Final round – final standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At. Nacional	6	3	1	2	7	7	7
Millonarios	6	3	1	2	9	7	7
America Cali	6	3	1	2	6	5	7
Independiente	6	0	3	3	3	6	3

Nacional champions due to bonus points obtained by winning both opening and closing championship

CHILE
FIRST DIVISION
Final standings
After 30 games: 1) Universidad de Chile 49pts; 2) Universidad Catolica 48; 3) O'Higgins 39; 4) Colo Colo 36; 5) Cobreloa 33; 6) Atacama, Union Espanola, Temuco 31; 9) Antofagasta, Everton 28; 11) Palestino, La Serena, Coquimbo 25; 14) Osorno 21, 15) Cobresal, Rangers 15
(2nd to 5th placed teams play for vice-championship and second Libertadores Cup place – Coquimbo and Osorno play in reclassification play-off – Cobresal and Rangers relegated)

PARAGUAY
FIRST DIVISION
2nd round – final standings
After 19 games: 1) Olimpia 34pts; 2) Cerro Porteno 28; 3) Humaita 24; 4) Sport Colombia, Nacional 23; 6) Guarani, Presidente Hayes 22; 8) Libertad, Sportivo Luqueno, Sol de America 21; 11) Cerro Porteno (Este) 18; 12) Cerro Cora, Boqueron, Colegiales, River Plate 16; 16) 8 de Diciembre 15; 17) Trinidense, 12 de Octubre 13; 19) Pettirossi 9; Guarani (Oviedo) 8.
First round winner Cerro Porteno beat Olimpia for title in play-off

PERU
FIRST DIVISION
2nd place play-off

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alianza Lima*	3	2	2	0	5	2	5
Sipesa	3	1	1	1	4	3	3
Leon Huanuco	3	1	0	2	6	6	2
Universitario	3	0	2	1	4	6	2

* *1pt deducted*

BOLIVIA
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Final round
Final standings *(after 10 games):* 1) Bolivar 15pts; 2) Jorge Wilsterman 11; 3) The Strongest 10; 4) Independiente Petrolero 9; 5) Guabira 8; 6) Real Santa Cruz 7.

MEXICO
FIRST DIVISION
Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Necaxa	16	10	5	1	28	7	25
America	16	9	5	2	51	25	23
Toros Neza	16	5	4	7	25	29	14
UA Guadalajara	16	3	8	5	20	24	14
UN Leon	16	4	5	7	19	20	13

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morelia	16	6	6	4	31	31	18
Cruz Azul	16	6	5	5	38	25	17
Veracruz	16	7	4	5	23	23	18
Atlante	16	5	6	5	22	29	16
Univ.Tamaulipas	16	5	6	5	21	25	16

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	16	9	4	3	32	20	22
Puebla	16	5	9	2	18	16	19
UNAM	16	7	2	7	22	22	16
Toluca	16	4	4	8	19	20	12
Tampico Madero	16	4	2	10	24	40	10

Group 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atlas	17	6	3	8	20	27	15
Monterrey	16	3	9	4	14	18	15
Leon	17	3	7	7	20	29	13
Santos	16	5	2	9	24	35	12

FRENCH GUYANA

	P	W	D	L	A	F	Pts
US Sinnamary	8	6	1	1	15	5	21
SC Kourou	8	6	0	2	14	7	20
ASJ Mana	8	4	3	1	18	7	19
Club Colonial	8	4	2	2	14	9	18
FC Approuague	8	4	2	2	16	15	18
Geldar Kourou	8	3	1	4	12	13	15
USL Montjoly	8	1	5	2	9	14	15
Sport Guyanais	8	1	3	3	11	10	14
Eclair Matoury	8	2	2	4	16	18	14
EF Iracoubo	8	2	1	5	11	19	13
AJ St Georges	8	2	1	5	5	15	13
St Elie	8	1	2	5	8	16	12

EL SALVADOR

	P	W	D	L	A	F	Pts
Luis Angel Firpo	21	13	7	1	39	14	34
FAS	21	11	8	2	37	14	33
Aquila	21	7	11	3	34	18	27
Atletico Marte	21	8	8	5	28	22	24
El Roble	21	6	11	4	23	22	23
Tiburones	21	5	10	6	21	27	20
ADET	21	5	8	8	27	29	18
Alianza	21	4	6	11	26	32	14
Mun. Limeno	21	2	9	10	14	32	13
Cojutepeque	21	1	8	12	16	55	10

* = One bonus point is awarded to any team that wins by four or more goals.

HONDURAS

	P	W	D	L	A	F	Pts
Olimpia	11	9	2	0	24	3	29
Motagua	10	6	3	1	13	5	21
Real Espana	11	4	4	3	11	10	16
Marathon	11	4	3	4	16	14	15
Victoria	11	3	5	3	8	8	14
Broncos	10	2	5	3	10	11	11
Vida	11	1	7	3	10	17	10
Platense	11	2	3	6	11	17	9
Dep Progreseno	11	1	2	6	7	21	9
Real Maya	11	1	5	5	6	10	8

COSTA RICA

	P	W	D	L	A	F	Pts
Saprissa	28	14	10	4	42	22	38
San Carlos	28	14	6	8	35	31	34
Alajuela	28	14	5	9	45	29	33
Cartagines	28	12	9	7	36	21	33
Herediano	28	13	5	10	41	35	31
Perez Zeledon	28	10	9	9	32	30	29
Ramonense	28	12	5	11	32	33	29
Puntarenas	27	8	9	10	29	36	25
Turrialba	28	8	8	12	25	30	24
Belen	28	6	10	12	17	31	22
Sagrada Familia	28	7	5	16	22	44	19
Limon	27	4	9	14	24	38	17

GUATEMALA
FIRST DIVISION
After 14 games: 1) Municipal, Comunicaciones 21pts; 3) Suchitepequez 17; 4) Xelaju 16; 5) Aurora 15; 6) Amatitlan 14; 7) Izabal, Sacachispas 13; 9) Coban Imperial 11; 10) Mictlan 10; 11) Escuintla 9; 12) Chiquimulilla 8.

HONDURAS
FIRST DIVISION
After 9 games: 1) Olimpia 22 pts; 2) Motagua 20; 3) Real Espana 12; 4) Marathon 11; 5) Broncos 10; 6) Victoria, Vida 9; 8) Real Maya, Progreseno 8; 10) Platense 5.

1995 LIBERTADORES CUP

1st round
GROUP 1
(ARGENTINA & URUGUAY)

22.02.95 Independiente (A) v River Plate (A)
22.02.95 Penarol (Uru) v Cerro (Uru)
01.03.95 Independiente v Penarol
01.03.95 River Plate v Cerro
08.03.95 Cerro v Independiente
08.03.95 Penarol v River Plate
29.03.95 River Plate v Independiente
29.03.95 Cerro v Penarol
05.04.95 Penarol v Independiente
05.04.95 Cerro v River Plate
12.04.95 River Plate v Penarol
12.04.9 Independiente v Cerro

GROUP 2
(PARAGUAY & VENEZUELA)

15.02.95 Olimpia (Par) v Cerro Porteno (Par)
15.02.95 Trujillanos (Ven) v Caracas (Ven)
21.02.95 Olimpia v Caracas
24.02.95 Cerro Porteno v Caracas
28.02.95 Trujillanos v Olimpia
03.03.95 Caracas v Olimpia
22.03.95 Cerro Porteno v Olimpia
22.03.95 Caracas v Trujillanos
28.03.95 Trujillanos v Cerro Porteno
31.03.95 Caracas v Cerro Porteno
04.04.95 Olimpia v Trujillanos
07.04.95 Cerro Porteno v Trujillanos

GROUP 3
(CHILE & COLOMBIA)

15.02.95 Univ. de Chile v Univ. Catolica (Ch)
15.02.95 At. Nacional (Co) v Millonarios (Co)
21.02.95 Millonarios v Univ. Catolica
24.02.95 Atletico Nacional v Univ. Catolica
07.03.95 Atletico Nacional v Univ. d Chile
10.03.95 Millonarios v Univ. de Chile
15.03.95 Univ. Catolica v Univ. de Chile
15.03.95 Millonarios v Atletico Nacional
21.03.95 Univ. Catolica v Millonarios
24.03.95 Univ. de Chile v Millonarios
04.04.95 Univ. Catolica v Atletico Nacional
07.04.95 Univ. de Chile v Millonarios

GROUP 4
(ECUADOR & BRAZIL)

22.02.95 Emelec (Ecu) v Nacional (Ecu)
22.02.95 Gremio (Bra) v Palmeiras (Bra)
07.03.95 Nacional v Gremio
10.03.95 Emelec v Gremio
14.03.95 Emelec v Palmeiras
17.03.95 Nacional v Palmeiras
22.03.95 Palmeiras v Gremio
23.03.95 Palmeiras v Gremio
28.03.95 Gremio v Emelec
31.03.95 Palmeiras v Emelec
04.04.95 Gremio v Nacional
07.04.95 Palmeiras v Nacional

GROUP 5
(PERU & BOLIVIA)

08.02.95 Bolivar (Bol) v Wilsterman (Bol)
08.02.95 Spt. Cristal (P) v Alianza Lima (P)
14.02.95 Wilsterman v Alianza Lima
17.02.95 Bolivar v Alianza Lima
21.02.95 Wilsterman v Sporting Cristal
24.02.95 Bolivar v Sporting Cristal
08.03.95 Alianza Lima v Sporting Cristal
08.03.95 Wilsterman v Bolivar
14.03.95 Alianza Lima v Wilsterman
17.03.95 Sporting Cristal v Wilsterman
21.03.95 Alianza Lima v Bolivar
24.03.95 Sporting Cristal v Bolivar

2nd round
1st leg: 26.04.95 – 2nd leg: 03.05.95

Quarter-finals
1st leg: 26.07.95 – 2nd leg: 02.08.95

Semi-finals
1st leg: 09.08.95 – 2nd leg: 16.08.95

Final
1st leg: 23.08.95 – 2nd leg: 30.08.95

● *TOP teams in each group qualify for the second round. Holders Velez Sarsfield of Argentina have a bye to the second round.*

AFRICA

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP
● *Nigeria qualify as holders*
● *South Africa qualify as hosts*

GROUP 1

04.09.94 Zaire v Malawi 1-1
04.09.94 Zimbabwe v Lesotho 5-0
15.10.94 Malawi v Zimbabwe 3-1
16.10.94 Cameroon v Zaire 1-0
13.11.94 Lesotho v Cameroon 2-0
13.11.94 Zimbabwe v Zaire 2-1
08.01.95 Cameroon v Malawi 0-0
08.01.95 Zaire v Lesotho 3-0
22.01.95 Lesotho v Malawi 0-2
22.01.95 Zimbabwe v Cameroon 4-1
08.04.95 Malawi v Zaire
09.04.95 Lesotho v Zimbabwe
23.04.95 Zaire v Cameroon
23.04.95 Zimbabwe v Malawi
04.06.95 Cameroon v Lesotho
04.06.95 Zaire v Zimbabwe
15.07.95 Malawi v Cameroon
16.07.95 Lesotho v Zaire
29.07.95 Malawi v Lesotho
30.07.95 Cameroon v Zimbabwe

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ZIMBABWE	4	3	0	1	12	5	6
MALAWI	4	2	2	0	6	2	6
ZAIRE	4	1	1	2	5	4	3
CAMEROON	4	1	1	2	2	6	3
LESOTHO	4	1	0	3	2	10	2

● *Swaziland withdrew*

GROUP 2

03.09.94 Senegal v Mauritania 0-0
04.09.94 Guinea-Bissau v Tunisia 1-3
Result nulified, Guinea-Bissau withdrew
04.09.94 Liberia v Togo 1-0
14.10.94 Mauritania v Guinea-Bissau 1-1
Result nulified, Guinea-Bissau withdrew
16.10.94 Togo v Senegal 2-0
11.11.94 Mauritania v Liberia 1-1
13.11.94 Guinea-Bissau v Senegal 1-4
Result nulified, Guinea-Bissau withdrew
13.11.94 Tunisia v Togo 1-1
07.01.95 Senegal v Tunisia 0-0
08.01.95 Togo v Mauritania 0-0
22.01.95 Liberia v Senegal 1-1
29.01.95 Tunisia v Mauritania 1-0
12.02.95 Tunisia v Liberia
07.04.95 Mauritania v Senegal
09.04.95 Togo v Liberia
22.04.95 Senegal v Togo
23.04.95 Liberia v Tunisia
04.06.96 Liberia v Mauritania
04.06.95 Togo v Tunisia
14.07.95 Mauritania v Togo
16.07.95 Tunisia v Senegal
28.07.95 Mauritania v Tunisia
29.07.95 Senegal v Liberia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LIBERIA	3	1	2	0	3	2	4
TOGO	4	1	2	1	3	2	4
TUNISIA	3	1	2	0	2	1	4
MAURITANIA	4	0	3	1	1	2	3
SENEGAL	4	0	3	1	1	3	3

● *Guinea-Bissau withdrew*

GROUP 3

04.09.94 Congo v Gambia 1-1
04.09.94 Ghana v Sierra Leone 4-1
16.10.94 Niger v Ghana 1-5
16.10.94 Sierra Leone v Congo 3-2
12.11.94 Gambia v Ghana 1-2
13.11.94 Niger v Sierra Leone 4-2
07.01.95 Sierra Leone v Gambia 2-0
08.01.95 Congo v Niger 3-1
22.01.95 Ghana v Congo 3-1
22.01.95 Niger v Gambia 1-1
08.04.95 Gambia v Congo
09.04.95 Sierra Leone v Ghana
23.04.95 Congo v Sierra Leone
23.04.95 Ghana v Niger
04.06.95 Ghana v Gambia
04.06.95 Sierra Leone v Niger
16.07.95 Gambia v Sierra Leone
16.07.95 Niger v Congo
30.07.95 Congo v Ghana
30.07.95 Gambia v Niger

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GHANA	4	4	0	0	14	4	8
SIERRA LEONE	4	2	0	2	8	10	4
CONGO	4	1	1	2	7	8	3
NIGER	4	1	1	2	7	11	3
GAMBIA	4	0	2	2	3	6	2

● *Central African Republic withdrew*

GROUP 4

03.09.94 Tanzania v Uganda 4-0
04.09.94 Ethiopia v Algeria 0-0
04.09.94 Sudan v Egypt 0-0
14.10.94 Algeria v Sudan 1-1
14.10.94 Egypt v Tanzania 5-1
15.10.94 Uganda v Ethiopia 4-1
11.11.94 Egypt v Ethiopia 5-0
12.11.94 Tanzania v Sudan 2-0
12.11.95 Uganda v Algeria 1-1
07.01.95 Sudan v Uganda 3-1
08.01.95 Algeria v Egypt 1-0
08.01.95 Ethiopia v Tanzania 1-0
21.01.95 Tanzania v Algeria 2-1
21.01.95 Uganda v Egypt 0-0
22.01.95 Ethiopia v Sudan 2-0
07.04.95 Algeria v Ethiopia
07.04.95 Egypt v Sudan
08.04.95 Uganda v Tanzania
22.04.95 Tanzania v Egypt
23.04.95 Ethiopia v Uganda
23.04.95 Sudan v Algeria
02.06.95 Algeria v Uganda
04.06.95 Ethiopia v Egypt
04.06.95 Sudan v Tanzania
14.07.95 Egypt v Algeria
15.07.95 Tanzania v Ethiopia
15.07.95 Uganda v Sudan
28.07.95 Algeria v Tanzania
28.07.95 Egypt v Uganda
30.07.95 Sudan v Ethiopia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
EGYPT	5	2	2	1	10	2	6
TANZANIA	5	3	0	2	9	7	6
ALGERIA	5	1	3	1	4	4	5
ETHIOPIA	5	2	1	2	4	9	5
SUDAN	5	1	2	2	4	6	4
UGANDA	5	1	2	2	6	9	4

GROUP 5

04.09.94 Madagascar v Sth Africa 0-1
Result nulified, Madagascar withdrew
15.10.94 South Africa v Mauritius 1-0
*Result nulified, South Africa withdrew**
13.11.94 Gabon v Mauritius 3-0
13.11.94 Zambia v South Africa 1-1
*Result nulified, South Africa withdrew**
20.11.94 Gabon v Zambia 2-1
10.01.95 Mauritius v Zambia 0-3
09.04.95 Zambia v Gabon
04.06.95 Mauritius v Gabon
16.07.95 Zambia v Mauritius

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GABON	2	2	0	0	5	1	4
ZAMBIA	3	1	1	1	5	3	3
MAURITIUS	2	0	0	2	0	6	
	0						

● *Madagascar withdrew*
● *Seychelles withdrew*
● *South Africa withdrew after being named as hosts for the finals*

GROUP 6

04.09.94 Angola v Namibia 2-0
04.09.94 Botswana v Guinea 0-1
04.09.94 Mali v Mozambique 2-1
15.10.94 Namibia v Mali 2-1
16.10.94 Guinea v Angola 3-1
16.10.94 Mozambique v Botswana 3-1
30.10.94 Mali v Guinea 2-0
13.11.94 Mali v Angola 0-0
13.11.94 Mozambique v Guinea 2-1
13.11.94 Namibia v Botswana 1-1
08.01.95 Angola v Mozambique 1-0
08.01.95 Botswana v Mali 1-3
08.01.95 Guinea v Namibia 3-0
22.01.95 Botswana v Angola 1-2
22.01.95 Mozambique v Namibia 4-2
09.04.95 Namibia v Angola
09.04.95 Guinea v Botswana
09.04.95 Mozambique v Mali
23.04.95 Angola v Guinea
23.04.95 Mali v Namibia
23.04.95 Botswana v Mozambique
04.06.95 Angola v Mali
04.06.95 Botswana v Namibia
04.06.95 Guinea v Mozambique
16.07.95 Mali v Botswana
16.07.95 Mozambique v Angola
16.07.95 Namibia v Guinea
30.07.95 Angola v Botswana
30.07.95 Guinea v Mali
30.07.95 Namibia v Mozambique

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MALI	5	3	1	1	8	4	7
ANGOLA	5	3	1	1	6	4	7
MOZAMBIQUE	5	3	0	2	10	7	6
GUINEA	5	3	0	2	8	5	6
NAMIBIA	5	1	1	3	5	11	3
BOTSWANA	5	0	1	4	4	10	1

GROUP 7

04.09.94 Burkina Faso v Morocco 2-1
13.11.94 Morocco v Ivory Coast 1-0
22.01.95 Ivory Coast v Burkina Faso 2-2
09.04.95 Morocco v Burkina Faso
04.06.95 Ivory Coast v Morocco
30.07.95 Burkina Faso v Ivory Coast

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BURKINA FASO	2	1	1	0	4	3	3
MOROCCO	2	1	0	1	2	2	2
IVORY COAST	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

● *Benin withdrew*
● *Cape Verde Islands withdrew*
● *Equatorial Guinea withdrew*

AFRICAN CHAMPIONS CUP
PRELIMINARY ROUND
Eleven Men In Flight (Swa) v Lobatse Gunners (Bot), Real Banjul (Gam) v Desportivo Travaderos (CVI).
1st leg: February 3-5
2nd leg: February 17-19
1ST ROUND
Burundi representative v Ismailia (Egy), Royal Lesotho Defence Force (Les) v St Pierroise (RI), Force Nationale de Securite (Dji) v Express FC (Uga), Etoile du Congo (Con) v Aigle de Nkongsamba (Camn), Dynamos (Zim) v Al Hilal (Sud), Dragons FC (Ben) v US Chaouia (Alg), Etoile Filante (BF) v Esperance (Tun), Fire Brigade (Mauritius) v Costa do Sol (Moz), Togo representative v BCC Lions (Nig), Eleven Men In Flight or Lobatse Gunners v Orlando Pirates (SA), Real Banjul (Gam) or Desportivo Travaderos (CVI) v Olympic Casablanca (Mor), Mbilinga (Gab) v Vita Club (Zai), Petro Atletico (Ang) v ASEC Abidjan (IC), Zambia representative v Simba (Tan), Liberia representative v Goldfields (Gha), Stade Malien (Mali) v Guinea representative.
1st leg: March 10-12
2nd leg: March 24-26

AFRICAN CUP-WINNERS CUP
1ST ROUND
Vaal Professionals (SA) v Young Africans (Tan), Matlama (Les) v Cadets (Mauritius), Blackpool (Zim) v St Andreenne (RI), Township Rollers (Bot) v Kabwe Warriors (Zam), Swaziland representative v Maxaquene (Moz), Wallidan (Gam) v Kawkab Marrakesh (Mor), Guinea representative v AS Marsa (Tun), Zumunta (Niger) v Stade Abidjan (IC), AS Nianan (Mali) v Togo representative, Independente Tomba (Ang) v Olympic Mvolye (Cam), EPB (Con) v Hearts of Oak (Gha), Burundi representative v Mangasport (Gab), JS Kabylie (Alg), El Merreikh (Sud).
Julius Berger (Nig) & holders Daring Club Motema Pembe (Zai) were given byes into the second round.
1st leg: March 10-12
2nd leg: March 24-26

1995 CAF CUP
1ST ROUND
Burundi representatives v Asante Kotoko (Gha), Cape Town Spurs (SA) v Arsenal (Les), Malindi (Tan) v Swaziland representative, Kampala City Council (Uga) v Port Sudan (Sud), Stade Tamponnaise (RI) v Zambia representative, Botswana representative v Ferroviario Maputo (Moz), JS Bordj Menaiel (Alg) v USFA (BF), SC Atletico (CVI) v Etoile Sahel (Tun), Guinea representative v Africa Sports (IC), Djoliba (Mali) v Sanga Balende (Zai), Cotonsport Garoua (Cam) v Mogas 90 (Ben), Inter Club (Con) v Petro Sport (Gab), Primiero Maio (Ang), Bendel Insurance (Nig, holders). Shooting Stars (Nig) & Agaza Omnisport (Togo) were given byes into the second round.
1st leg: March 10-12
2nd leg: March 24-26

1996 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

GROUP 1

04.09.94 Israel v Poland 2-1
07.09.94 Slovakia v France 0-0
07.09.94 Romania v Azerbaijan 3-0
08.10.94 France v Romania 0-0
12.10.94 Israel v Slovakia 2-2
12.10.94 Poland v Azerbaijan 1-0
12.11.94 Romania v Slovakia 3-2
16.11.94 Poland v France 0-0
16.11.94 Azerbaijan v Israel 0-2
13.12.94 Azerbaijan v France 0-2
14.12.94 Israel v Romania 1-1
29.03.95 Romania v Poland
29.03.95 Israel v France
29.03.95 Slovakia v Azerbaijan
25.04.95 Poland v Israel
26.04.95 France v Slovakia
26.04.95 Azerbaijan v Romania
07.06.95 Poland v Slovakia
07.06.95 Romania v Israel
16.08.95 France v Poland
16.08.95 Azerbaijan v Slovakia
06.09.95 France v Azerbaijan
06.09.95 Slovakia v Israel
06.09.95 Poland v Romania
11.10.95 Romania v France
11.10.95 Israel v Azerbaijan
11.10.95 Slovakia v Poland
15.11.95 Slovakia v Romania
15.11.95 Azerbaijan v Poland
15.11.95 France v Israel

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Romania	4	2	2	0	7	3	8
Israel	4	2	2	0	7	4	8
France	4	1	3	0	2	0	6
Poland	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Slovakia	3	0	2	1	4	5	2
Azerbaijan	4	0	0	4	0	8	0

GROUP 2

07.09.94 Cyprus v Spain 1-2
07.09.94 Macedonia v Denmark 1-1
07.09.94 Belgium v Armenia 2-0
08.10.94 Armenia v Cyprus 0-0
12.10.94 Denmark v Belgium 3-1
12.10.94 Macedonia v Spain 0-2
16.11.94 Belgium v Macedonia 1-1
16.11.94 Spain v Denmark 3-0
16.11.94 Cyprus v Armenia 2-0
17.12.94 Belgium v Spain 1-4
17.12.94 Macedonia v Cyprus 3-0
29.03.95 Spain v Belgium
29.03.95 Cyprus v Denmark
26.04.95 Armenia v Spain
26.04.95 Belgium v Cyprus
26.04.95 Denmark v Macedonia
10.05.95 Armenia v Macedonia
07.06.95 Denmark v Cyprus
07.06.95 Macedonia v Belgium
07.06.95 Spain v Armenia
16.08.95 Armenia v Denmark
06.09.95 Belgium v Denmark
06.09.95 Spain v Cyprus
06.09.95 Macedonia v Armenia
07.10.95 Armenia v Belgium
11.10.95 Denmark v Spain
11.10.95 Cyprus v Macedonia
15.11.95 Spain v Macedonia
15.11.95 Cyprus v Belgium
15.11.95 Denmark v Armenia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	4	4	0	0	11	2	12
Macedonia	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Denmark	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Cyprus	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Belgium	4	1	1	2	5	8	4
Armenia	3	0	1	2	0	4	1

GROUP 3

07.09.94 Iceland v Sweden 0-1
07.09.94 Hungary v Turkey 2-2
12.10.94 Turkey v Iceland 5-0
12.10.94 Switzerland v Sweden 4-2
16.11.94 Switzerland v Iceland 1-0
16.11.94 Sweden v Hungary 2-0
14.12.94 Turkey v Switzerland 1-2
29.03.95 Turkey v Sweden
29.03.95 Hungary v Switzerland
26.04.95 Hungary v Sweden
26.04.95 Switzerland v Turkey
01.06.95 Sweden v Iceland
11.06.95 Iceland v Hungary
16.08.95 Iceland v Switzerland
06.09.95 Sweden v Switzerland
06.09.95 Turkey v Hungary
11.10.95 Switzerland v Hungary
11.10.95 Iceland v Turkey
11.11.95 Hungary v Iceland
15.11.95 Sweden v Turkey

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	3	3	0	0	7	3	9
Sweden	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Turkey	3	1	1	1	8	4	4
Hungary	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Iceland	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

GROUP 4

04.09.94 Estonia v Croatia 0-2
07.09.94 Slovenia v Italy 1-1
07.09.94 Ukraine v Lithuania 0-2
08.10.94 Estonia v Italy 0-2
09.10.94 Croatia v Lithuania 2-0
12.10.94 Ukraine v Slovenia 0-0
13.11.94 Ukraine v Estonia 3-0
16.11.94 Slovenia v Lithuania 1-2
16.11.94 Italy v Croatia 1-2
25.03.95 Italy v Estonia
25.03.95 Croatia v Ukraine
29.03.95 Slovenia v Estonia
29.03.95 Ukraine v Italy
29.03.95 Lithuania v Croatia
26.04.95 Lithuania v Italy
26.04.95 Croatia v Slovenia
26.04.95 Estonia v Ukraine
07.06.95 Lithuania v Slovenia
11.06.95 Estonia v Slovenia
11.06.95 Ukraine v Croatia
16.08.95 Estonia v Lithuania
03.09.95 Croatia v Estonia
06.09.95 Italy v Slovenia
06.09.95 Lithuania v Ukraine
08.10.95 Croatia v Italy
11.10.95 Slovenia v Ukraine
11.10.95 Lithuania v Estonia
11.11.95 Italy v Ukraine
15.11.95 Slovenia v Croatia
15.11.95 Italy v Lithuania

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Lithuania	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Italy	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Ukraine	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Slovenia	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Estonia	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

GROUP 5

06.09.94 Czech Rep v Malta 6-1
07.09.94 Luxembourg v Holland 0-4
07.09.94 Norway v Byelorussia 1-0
12.10.94 Malta v Czech Rep 0-0
12.10.94 Byelorussia v Luxembourg 2-0
12.10.94 Norway v Holland 1-1
16.11.94 Byelorussia v Norway 0-4
16.11.94 Holland v Czech Rep 0-0
14.12.94 Malta v Norway 0-1
14.12.94 Holland v Luxembourg 5-0
22.02.95 Malta v Luxembourg
29.03.95 Czech Rep v Byelorussia
29.03.95 Luxembourg v Norway
29.03.95 Holland v Malta
26.04.95 Byelorussia v Malta
26.04.95 Czech Rep v Holland
26.04.95 Norway v Luxembourg
07.06.95 Byelorussia v Holland
07.06.95 Luxembourg v Czech Rep
07.06.95 Norway v Malta
16.08.95 Norway v Czech Rep
06.09.95 Czech Rep v Norway
06.09.95 Luxembourg v Malta
06.09.95 Holland v Byelorussia
07.10.95 Byelorussia v Czech Rep
11.10.95 Malta v Holland
11.10.95 Luxembourg v Byelorussia
12.11.95 Malta v Byelorussia
15.11.95 Czech Rep v Luxembourg
15.11.95 Holland v Norway

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	4	3	1	0	7	1	10
Holland	4	2	2	0	10	1	8
Czech Republic	3	1	2	0	6	1	5
Byelorussia	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Malta	3	0	1	2	1	7	1
Luxembourg	3	0	0	3	0	11	0

GROUP 6

20.04.94 N. Ireland v Liechtenstein 4-1
07.09.94 Liechtenstein v Austria 0-4
07.09.94 N. Ireland v Portugal 1-2
07.09.94 Latvia v Rep. Ireland 0-3
09.10.94 Latvia v Portugal 1-3
12.10.94 Austria v N. Ireland 1-2
12.10.94 Rep. Ireland v Liechtenstein 4-0
13.11.94 Portugal v Austria 1-0
15.11.94 Liechtenstein v Latvia 0-1
16.11.94 N. Ireland v Rep. Ireland 0-4
18.12.94 Portugal v Liechtenstein 8-0
29.03.95 Rep. Ireland v N. Ireland
29.03.95 Austria v Latvia
26.04.95 Rep. Ireland v Portugal
26.04.95 Latvia v N. Ireland
26.04.95 Austria v Liechtenstein
03.06.95 Portugal v Latvia
03.06.95 Liechtenstein v Rep. Ireland
07.06.95 N. Ireland v Latvia
11.06.95 Rep. Ireland v Austria
15.08.95 Liechtenstein v Portugal
16.08.95 Latvia v Austria
03.09.95 Portugal v N. Ireland
06.09.95 Austria v Rep. Ireland
06.09.95 Latvia v Liechtenstein
11.10.95 Rep. Ireland v Latvia
11.10.95 Austria v Portugal
11.10.95 Liechtenstein v N. Ireland
15.11.95 Portugal v Rep. Ireland
15.11.95 N. Ireland v Austria

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	4	4	0	0	14	2	12
Rep. Ireland	3	3	0	0	11	0	9
Northern Ireland	4	2	0	2	7	8	6
Austria	3	1	0	2	5	3	3
Latvia	3	1	0	2	2	6	3
Liechtenstein	5	0	0	5	1	21	0

GROUP 7

07.09.94 Wales v Albania 2-0
07.09.94 Georgia v Moldova 0-1
12.10.94 Moldova v Wales 3-2
12.10.94 Bulgaria v Georgia 2-0
16.11.94 Albania v Germany 1-2
16.11.94 Georgia v Wales 5-0
16.11.94 Bulgaria v Moldova 4-1
14.12.94 Wales v Bulgaria 0-3
14.12.94 Moldova v Germany 0-3
14.12.94 Albania v Georgia 0-1
18.12.94 Germany v Albania 2-1
29.03.95 Georgia v Germany
29.03.95 Bulgaria v Wales
29.03.95 Albania v Moldova
26.04.95 Germany v Wales
26.04.95 Moldova v Bulgaria
26.04.95 Georgia v Albania
07.06.95 Bulgaria v Germany
07.06.95 Wales v Georgia
07.06.95 Moldova v Albania
06.09.95 Germany v Georgia
06.09.95 Wales v Moldova
06.09.95 Albania v Bulgaria
07.10.95 Bulgaria v Albania
08.10.95 Germany v Moldova
11.10.95 Wales v Germany
11.10.95 Georgia v Bulgaria
15.11.95 Germany v Bulgaria
15.11.95 Albania v Wales
15.11.95 Moldova v Georgia

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	3	3	0	0	9	1	9
Germany	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Georgia	4	2	0	2	6	3	6
Moldova	4	2	0	2	5	9	6
Wales	4	1	0	3	4	11	3
Albania	3	0	0	3	1	5	0

GROUP 8

07.09.94 Finland v Scotland 0-2
07.09.94 Faroe Islands v Greece 1-5
12.10.94 Scotland v Faroe Islands 5-1
12.10.94 Greece v Finland 4-0
12.10.94 Russia v San Marino 4-0
16.11.94 Scotland v Russia 1-1
16.11.94 Greece v San Marino 2-0
16.11.94 Finland v Faroe Islands 5-0
14.12.94 Finland v San Marino 4-1
18.12.94 Greece v Scotland 1-0
29.03.94 Russia v Scotland
29.03.95 San Marino v Finland
26.04.95 San Marino v Scotland
26.04.95 Greece v Russia
26.04.95 Faroe Islands v Finland
06.05.95 Russia v Faroe Islands
25.05.95 Faroe Islands v San Marino
07.06.95 Faroe Islands v Scotland
07.06.95 San Marino v Russia
11.06.95 Finland v Greece
16.08.95 Scotland v Greece
16.08.95 Finland v Russia
06.09.95 Scotland v Finland
06.09.95 Faroe Islands v Russia
06.09.95 San Marino v Greece
11.10.95 Russia v Greece
11.10.95 San Marino v Faroe Islands
15.11.95 Scotland v San Marino
15.11.95 Russia v Finland
15.11.95 Greece v Faroe Islands

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Greece	4	4	0	0	12	1	12
Scotland	4	2	1	1	8	3	7
Finland	4	2	0	2	9	7	6
Russia	2	1	1	0	5	1	4
San Marino	3	0	0	3	1	10	0
Faroe Islands	3	0	0	3	2	15	0

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AGE GROUPS:

SUPER:	Boys born	August 1, 1975 & later
GROUP A:	Boys born	August 1, 1975 & later
GROUP B:	Boys born	August 1, 1977 & later
GROUP C:	Boys born	August 1, 1980 & later
GROUP D:	Boys born	August 1, 1982 & later
GROUP E:	Boys born	August 1, 1982 & later
GROUP F:	Girls born	August 1, 1975 & later

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BRIAN GLANVILLE'S
LAST WORD

Young, gifted and held back

EVER SINCE John Charles and Bruno Nicole joined Juventus at the same time, in the summer of 1957, I have been sharply aware of how gifted young players who sign for big clubs can find their careers stunted by the expensive, bought-in star.

Memories were re-activated when Manchester United shelled out £6million plus Keith Gillespie for Andy Cole, and I wondered what might now become of Paul Scholes.

Or, for that matter, of David Beckham and Simon Davies, those highly promising young men, 19 and 20 respectively, who appeared and scored from the flanks when a much weakened United side rose above their problems to beat Galatasaray at Old Trafford.

Does Beckham, a London boy from Leytonstone, who could have moved a few miles across the city to Spurs, now regret the fact that his boyish passion for United led him instead to Old Trafford, where so many stars bar his way?

Though Gillespie, the highly-promising Northern Ireland left-winger, may at first have felt a pang at leaving Manchester United for Newcastle, perhaps he is now beginning to think that he has accomplished a great escape.

'When you've bought so many stars, how do the youngsters get in?'

How much room could there have been for him at Old Trafford, with such stars as Ryan Giggs and Lee Sharpe around?

The red-headed Scholes is a striker of great promise, with that marvellous instinctive gift of somehow 'losing' himself in the box, so that he has the opportunity to go for goal with foot – he is very acrobatic – or head. Despite his modest height.

Nicole was 17 when Juve signed him from Padova: for a fee larger than the £65,000 they paid Leeds for Charles! But there was no room for two centre-forwards. Charles became a folk hero, and Nicole, a big, strapping fellow, had to do what he could on the right wing.

While Charles was scoring his 90-odd League goals for Juve, Nicole languished. He did eventually play centre-forward, he did win caps for Italy, he did transfer with some success to Roma. But he never truly fulfilled his promise. Had he moved initially to a lesser club, it is far more likely that he would have done so.

And there's the rub. Big clubs attract big potential talents. More than 40 years ago, at Stamford Bridge, after a Chelsea-United match, I remember Matt Busby, grand progenitor of United's youth policy, saying to me, "If you don't put them in, you can't know what you've got." Simple but so sensible.

But when you've bought so many stars, how do the youngsters get in?

It's happening in Italy, too, where a brilliant young bunch of attackers has emerged, only to find it terribly hard to gain a place in the sun. Or in the first team.

Marco Di Vaio of Lazio, Francesco Totti of Roma, Francesco Flachi of Fiorentina, Alessandro Del Piero and Corrado Grabbi of Juve. These constitute a remarkable haul of new talent in the very places which are difficult to fill: but what are their hopes of success, especially if they stay where they are?

In Grabbi's case, staying where he is means staying in the youth team, to which he has been relegated after his involvement in a brawl at a disco. He is 19, the grandson of a former Italian international, but if he wishes to emulate him he will have to learn to behave himself.

No such problems seem to afflict the dazzling Del Piero, and the others; good boys, all. Which could be another problem. Good boys don't want to move; when suddenly they find that time has overtaken them.

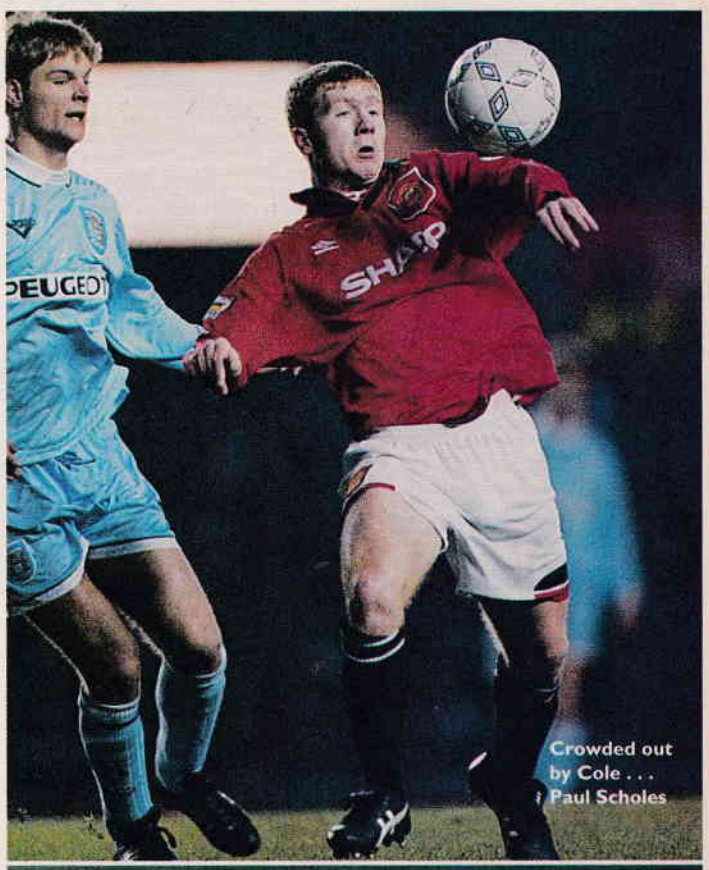
Di Vaio, 19, son of the janitor of a block of expensive flats on the periphery of Rome, has scored some marvellous goals this season. But with Boksic, Signori and Casiraghi in his way, he does not get on too often.

Even the 20-year-old Del Piero has sometimes found his way barred, and only a series of injuries to the illustrious Roberto Baggio gave him a sustained run in the team.

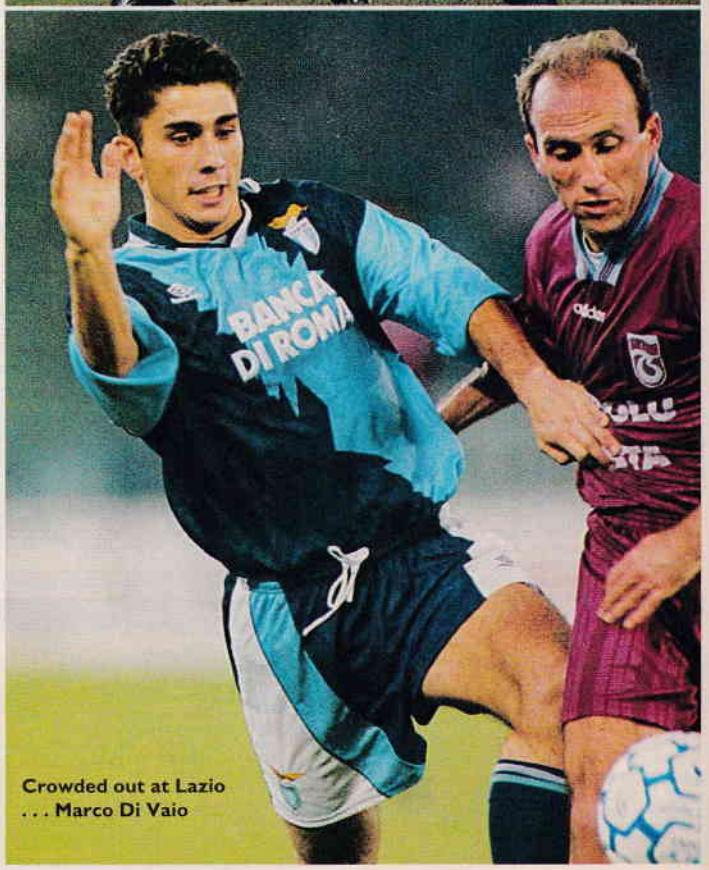
Flachi, 19, has been crowded out at Fiorentina by Gabriel Batistuta and Baiano, though when he has had the change he has done impressively well.

Totti, 18, a Roman, transforms a Roma attack in which even the great South Americans, Balbo and Fonseca, had been struggling, when he went on as a sub against Bari in the Olimpico. He made one, scored one and Roma won, 2-0.

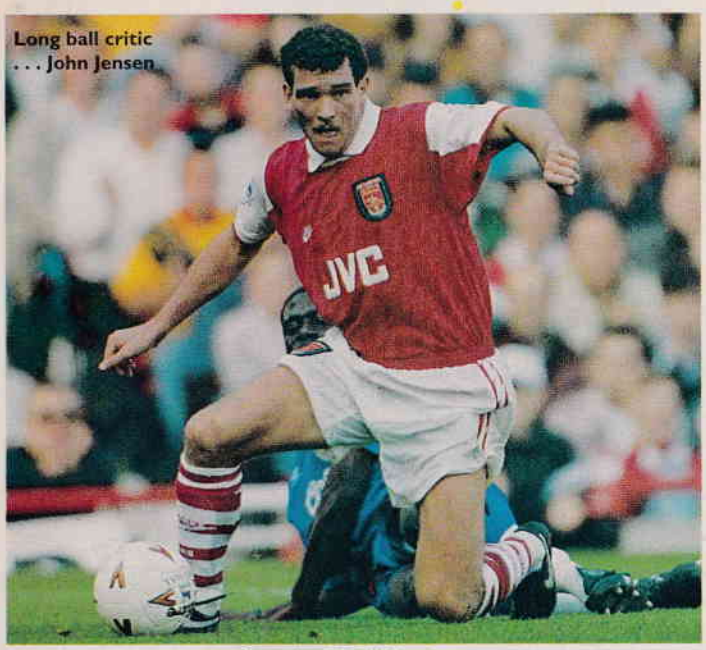
On reflection, perhaps Cole was the lucky one. George Graham let him leave Highbury as surplus to requirements, preferring to soldier on with the likes of Campbell and Smith. But had Cole stayed, rather than gone on to Bristol City after a loan period at Fulham, would his talent have shone as it has?



Crowded out by Cole . . . Paul Scholes



Crowded out at Lazio . . . Marco Di Vaio



Long ball critic . . . John Jensen

Long ball maestro . . . Gerson

The long and short of it

FASCINATING to see John Jensen, Arsenal's Danish international midfielder, he of the great goal in Gothenburg (and so few others) publicly criticise his team's tactics.

"It's long ball all the time," he said, "from the defence up to the forwards. I don't like it. The more you run, the more you don't get the ball, and the only thing you can do when the ball comes down is hoof it again."

Certain ironies suggest themselves. Jensen, after all, is hardly the most inventive passer of the ball. But it's good to see the pendulum swing so strongly, as I mentioned in last month's column, against the crassness and crudity of the long ball game: whatever pseudo-scientific gloss Good Old Charlie Hughes (how we shall all miss him!) can put on it.

Another irony, however, is that when Arsenal were at their peak and prime between the wars, they made extensive use of the long ball; as some of their old stars occasionally remind us. Breakaway football, after all, was the warp and woof of the Gunners' success. But there was a difference.

By and large, those searching long passes, to Drake and Lambert down the middle, to Hulme and Bastin on the wings, were struck by the incomparable Alex James, superbly calibrated, endlessly precise and inventive. Though James, of course, had magical ball control and could beat man after man if needed.

There are, in a word, long balls . . . and long balls. Those which have been hoofed and those which have been thought about. After all, who hit a better long pass than one of the most cogent critics of Brazil's 1994 World Cup winners; Gerson, of the phenomenal left foot. I can still see that 50-yards ball landing on Pele's chest in the box, in Guadalajara, in the 1970 tournament.

Cheap, Mr Blair

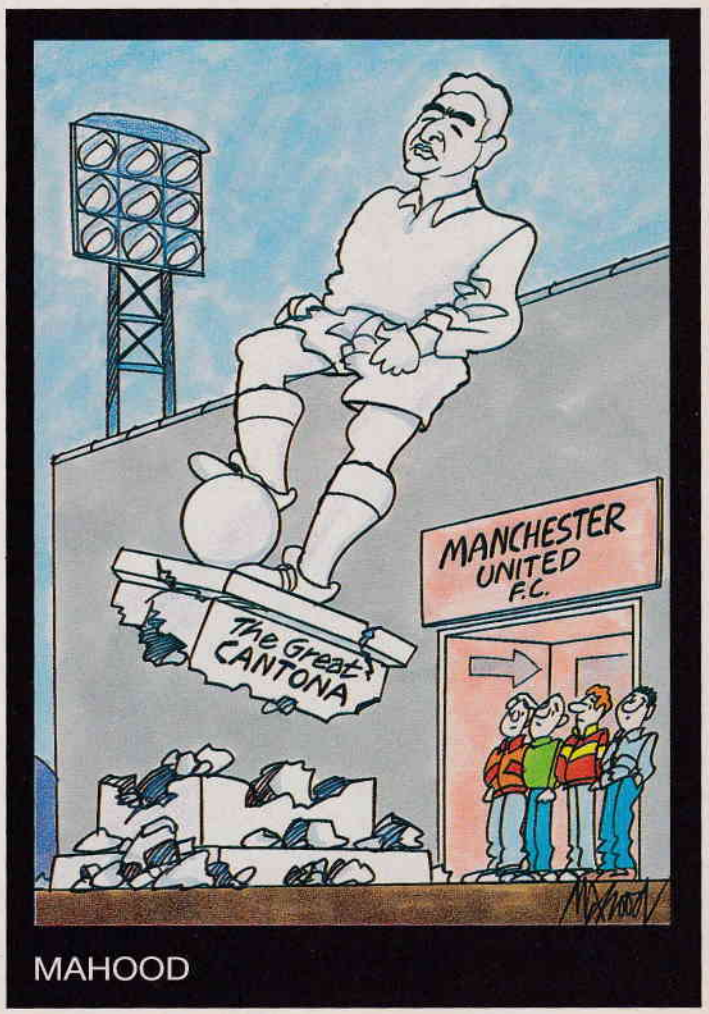
CAN'T politicians leave football alone?

It was a very cheap shot by Tony Blair, Prime Minister Designate, (standing in for John Major) to use the occasion of Sir Stanley Matthews's 80th birthday dinner to make stale, warmed-up criticisms of the game.

Some were banal. Others just plain ignorant. Such as using, as a stick with which to beat contemporary football, the fact that when Stanley went back to Stoke from Blackpool in 1961, he cost only £2,500. That, Mr Blair – or your deluded speech writer – was a TOKEN fee for a 46-year-old player.

A moratorium, please, Blair, Mellor, Hoey, on politicians who use football . . . as a political football.

Life at 80 . . . Sir Stanley Matthews



A to Z OF THE WORLD'S GREAT GROUNDS

By SIMON INGLIS, author of *The Football Grounds of Great Britain* and *The Football Grounds of Europe*

RASUNDA

Name Rasunda Fotbollstadion
Capacity 27,900 all-seated
Opened 17 May 1937 by the errant King Gustaf the Fifth, who called it a tennis stadium!
Location In Solna, a northern suburb of Stockholm

● VENUE for the 1958 World Cup Final, the Rasunda once held nearly 53,000 but in its new all-seated state lost out to the larger Gothenberg Stadium for the 1992 European Championships Final. Not that fans of the resident club AIK ever have trouble getting tickets. So poor are their gates that multi-coloured seats were dotted around the stadium to make it look more crowded. During the week the Rasunda is a busy place, however. In the old West Stand are the Swedish FA offices. Built into the rear of the modern East Stand is a tall corner office block and complex occupied by the two insurance companies which now own majority shares in the stadium. Odd really, because 22,100 of the seats are not covered at all.
WORLD SOCCER rating 7 (out of 10)

KING FAHD STADIUM, RIYADH

Capacity 66,862 all-padded seating
Opened 2 March 1988, Saudi Arabia v Oman (Gulf Cup)

● WEIRD and wonderful, or what? This $568million tented marvel in the desert is like no other stadium on earth, particularly for floodlit games when the translucent roof glows against the Arabian night sky. No expense has been spared, from its underground 8,000 cubic metre reservoir which keeps the pitch from getting parched, to the Persian carpets laid out along the VIP entrance (the outside entrance, that is!). The World Youth Championships were held here in 1989, as was January's six-nation Intercontinental Cup tournament. But the stadium deserves a bigger international audience, even if for football there is the usual problem with German-influenced designs of too much space between its front rows and the running track. And of course there's not a bar for miles around.
WORLD SOCCER rating 9 (out of 10)

THE ROSE BOWL

● REMEMBER this one? Didn't it look swell? All those swaying palms, Art Deco embellishments, and the vast sweep of that open bowl in Pasadena? So what if the reality was just about the most primitive international stadium between San Francisco and Warsaw. Okay, so maybe the bench seats were cramped and there wasn't an inch of shade for the 94,194 who filled it for that soccer-type game they played there sometime last summer ('cos them nice boys at FIFA didn't make no fuss about putting up no roof, like they had insisted on in 1990). Hell, a bit of sun and smog never hurt nobody – 120° F like they said it was for one game ain't nothin' – and anyway, this place is one year older'n Wembley, so what did you expect?
WORLD SOCCER rating 5 (out of 10)

ROME

Name Stadio Olimpico
Capacity 82,656 all seated
Opened 17 May 1953, Italy v Hungary

● SAN SIRO for the sport, but Rome for romance. On two sides the Olympic Stadium nestles up to the wooded slopes of Monte Mario. Leading from the River Tiber is a monumental marble approach to the Foro Italico sports park, which around the stadium includes a fabulously kitsch training track and tennis centre. Roma and Lazio share the main stadium, which has hosted the Olympics (in 1960) and more major UEFA finals and athletics events than any other European stadium. It was even given the Pope's official blessing after it was revamped for Italia '90. Both two end curves were built nearer to the pitch and, covering the new pale turquoise seats, a dazzling roof went up with a white tubular steel frame, across which cream-coloured Teflon sections have been draped and shaped using steel ropes. Many locals were furious that their treasured views of the hills were now obscured, but the new shaded effect is actually a conscious echo of the ancient Colosseum, which once had a canvas roof and still manages to pull in the crowds, a few miles away across the city. How many of our world stadia today will be so popular in 2,000 years?
WORLD SOCCER rating 9 (out of 10)

NEXT

EXCLUSIVE!

DEL PIERO AND HOW JUVENTUS TRIED TO GIVE HIM AWAY

EXCLUSIVE!

CLAUDIO CANIGGIA'S VERDICT ON MILAN

EXCLUSIVE!

DANIEL PASSARELLA TALKS ABOUT THE NEW ARGENTINA

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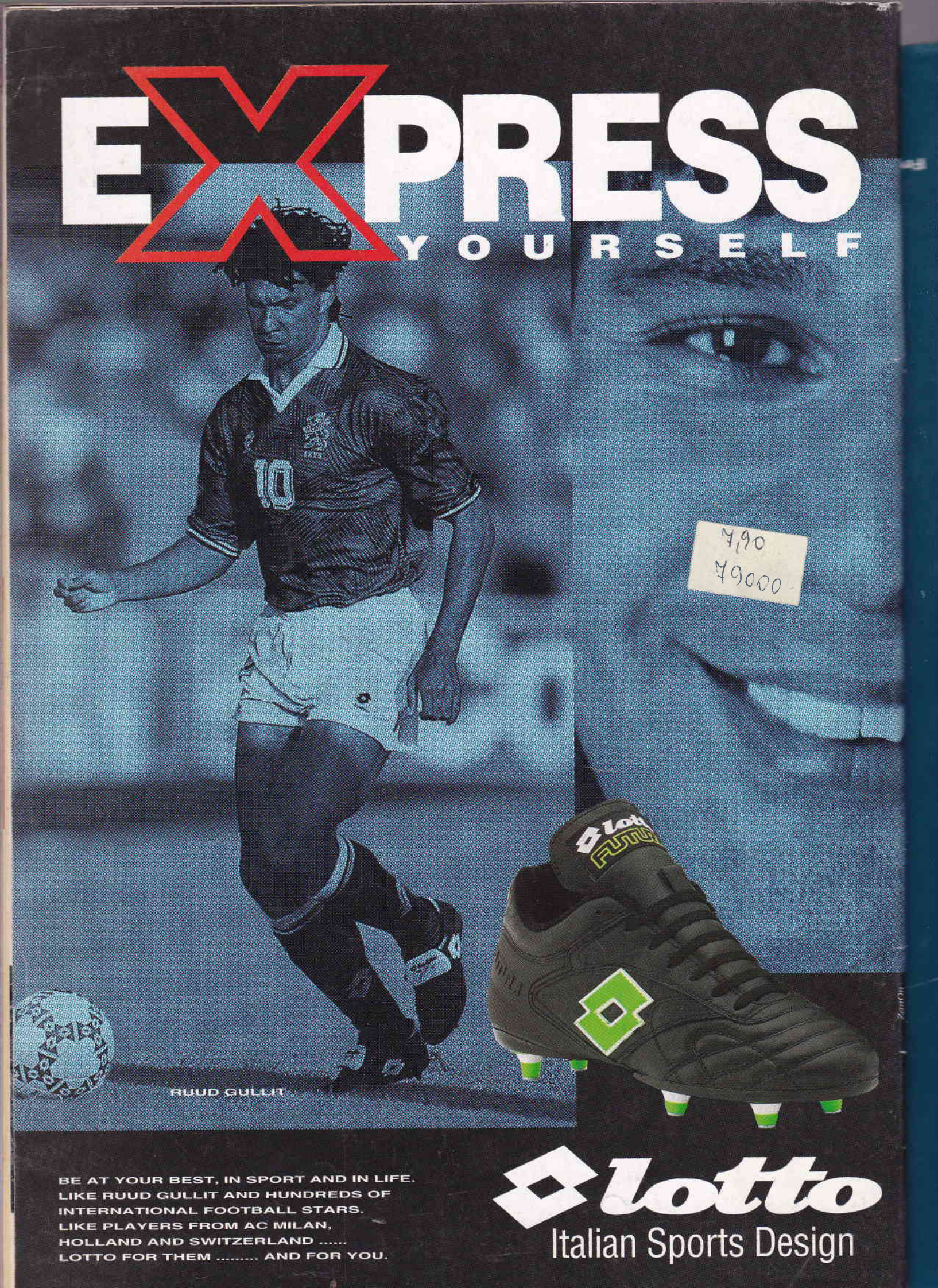
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LIKE PLAYERS FROM AC MILAN,
HOLLAND AND SWITZERLAND .....
LOTTO FOR THEM ..... AND FOR YOU.
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